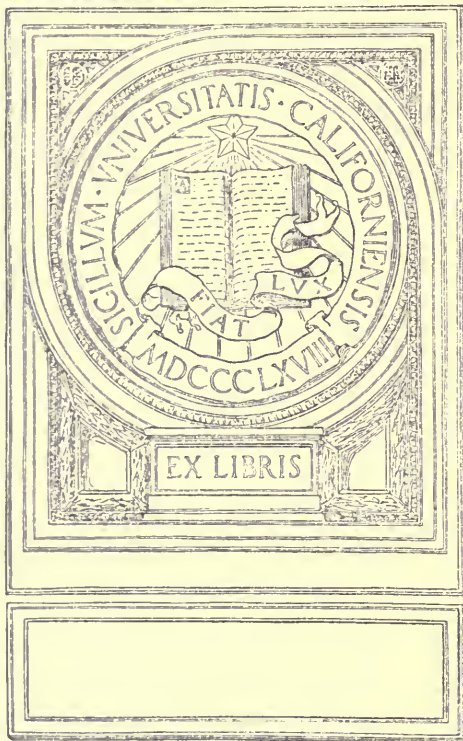


JACK
HARKAWAY
IN
CUBA



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LOS ANGELES



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"I AM BEING ASSASSINATED!" YELLED MOLE, FALLING.—ADVENT. IN AMER. AND CUBA.—*Frontispiece.*

JACK HARKAWAY'S

ADVENTURES

IN AMERICA AND CUBA

BEING A CONTINUATION OF
ADVENTURES AROUND THE WORLD

BY
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JACK HARKAWAY IN AMERICA AND CUBA.

CHAPTER I.

THE END OF THE SCENE.

It was after a kind of dreamy stupor had worn off, that our hero at length opened his eyes.

He felt stronger, and able to remember all that had occurred, but a raging thirst devoured him.

He would have given the world, if he had had it, for the smallest drink of water.

The first object on which his eye rested was the hapless negro, lying on the grass in a pool of crimson gore.

"The wretches have murdered poor Monday," he exclaimed, with a cry of horror.

"No, dey ain't, Massa Jack, not jess yet," replied the wounded man, faintly, as he opened his eyes, and looked up dimly at the sound of the well-known voice.

"But you are bleeding," said Jack, pityingly.

"Yes, him tink him am," was the reply; "him catch de bullet in him ribs somewheres; but never mind that. How you do yourself, Massa Jack?"

"I'm all right, if I could only untie my arms and feet," Jack replied!

"Tank God for dat?" fervently exclaimed Monday.

"This chile soon get you down."

The staunch Limbian made an effort to rise.

But the effort was in vain, and he sank down with a suppressed groan.

"It no good, Massa Jack; him got more dan him can carry dis time."

And with this faint attempt at a joke, he fell back again upon the greensward insensible.

Jack looked down upon his faithful friend with intense commiseration.

It was the only thing he could do.

"Poor Monday will die from loss of blood," he murmured, anxiously, "and I fastened up here like this. If I could only——"

He broke off suddenly, as a faint chirp caught his ear.

It was the poor monkey, who was just beginning to have a dim sort of consciousness that he was alive.

Presently he sat up and looked round him.

Then he rubbed his head with his paw.

After which he shook it—probably to be sure his brains were still inside.

Having done this, he threw several somersaults and flipflaps.

After which, having caught a flea, he seemed to be quite restored.

Our hero watched his coming to with much interest, and then he cried—

"Nero, old man, I am up here."

Nero looked up at the bough with a lively chirp, and grinned and nodded as though he was quite pleased to see his young master again.

"Come up, old fellow," continued Jack.

The monkey did not scamper away as he had done before, but instantly swung himself up to the branch on which our hero lay extended, and sat looking at him seriously.

"I'm in a fix, old boy," said Jack to his dumb companion, "and I want you to get me out of it."

As he spoke, he directed Nero's attention, as well as he could, to his bound arms.

The monkey seemed to understand him perfectly.

In an instant he was sitting astride his master, picking at the knots with all his might.

In less than a minute our hero felt the pressure removed from his arms.

Nero had untied the napkin, and was now flourishing it triumphantly in his paw.

Jack, having recovered the use of his hands, quickly took out his knife and severed the cords that bound his feet.

He was once more free.

"Now for poor Monday," he exclaimed, as he dropped from the branch.

His limbs were so stiff and cramped from the long continued pressure they had undergone that he could scarcely support himself

It was with difficulty he could even reach his wounded friend.

But having done so, he knelt down and raised his head in his arms.

"Monday, Monday—dear old fellow! speak to me," entreated young Jack.

The negro slowly opened his eyes.

"Him can't say nothin', Massa Jack, now, but God bless you!" he gasped, faintly, and then closed his eyes again.

"What can I do for him?" thought our hero. "If I only had some water, or some rum."

Monday caught the word, and he murmured, almost audibly—

"Rum—lilly drop."

Alas! there was neither one nor the other, and Jack was almost fainting for a draught himself.

What was to be done?

They were some distance from home, our hero not in very good walking condition, Monday unable to walk at all, Nero—the only one who seemed quite himself—unable to take a message.

"Help must be got somehow," soliloquised Jack; "and yet, if I leave this poor fellow in this state, he'll bleed to death before I can get back, and that would be horrible."

As the only thing he could do, our hero endeavoured to staunch the blood that oozed from Monday's side with the napkin.

But it was soaked through and through in a few moments.

"I must chance it, and go for help," he exclaimed, desperately, as he rose to his feet. "Come on, Nero; we must be quick."

He took a few hasty steps, stopped, and returned.

"Shall I go or stay?" he asked himself, irresolutely, as he looked down at the unconscious form.

"If I go," he meditated, "it may save his life; if I stay, he's sure to die. My mind's made up: I'll go."

Our hero, having uttered these words, was about to depart when, to his surprise, Monday checked him.

"Don't go, Massa Jack," he said, faintly ; "him hear de sound ob footsteps coming."

Jack started at these words, and look anxiously around.

If his enemies should be returning !

But he neither saw nor heard any thing.

"I think you are mistaken, old fellow," he said, kindly.

"No, him not, Massa Jack," returned Monday, confidently ; "him know de steps."

The black's acute ear, as he lay on the ground, had detected sounds at a distance, which to our hero's less practised sense were perfectly inaudible.

"You say you know the steps," asked Jack, anxiously ; "whose are they?"

"Dey Sunday's steps," replied the negro.

"Sunday? Hurrah!" cried our hero; "hurrah! Go and meet him, Nero."

He pointed as he spoke, and away started the monkey.

Monday proved to be perfectly right.

In less than two minutes the voice of the American was heard shouting—

"Whar you two got to, eh? No good hiding out ob de way ; dis chile sure to find you, yah, yah!"

A few moments more, and Sunday, with Nero hopping along at his side, came in sight.

Young Jack uttered a cry of joy, and rushed forward to meet him.

"Well, Massa Jack, how de big spree getting on, eh?" asked Sunday, with a broad grin on his black face, as they reached each other.

"Big spree?"

"Him mean de big spree you and Monday goin to hab togeder. Am it ober yet?"

But the cheerful expression rapidly died out of his face as our hero replied, seriously—

"Yes; the 'big spree,' as you call it, is all over, and unless you move yourself quickly, it's very likely you'll be just in time to come in at the death."

"Death, massa," almost gasped Sunday. "Who going to die?"

"Come and see," replied young Jack, as he began to retrace his steps.

Sunday followed.

A very few yards brought them to where the wounded Monday was lying.

"There!" said our hero, as he pointed to him.

"What—brudder Monday!" exclaimed the American, in remorseful accents, as he looked down upon his disabled comrade.

The latter opened his eyes, and looked up at him feebly.

It was too much for Sunday.

He burst at once into a flood of penitential tears, and fell on his knees by his side.

"Forgib me, mis'rable sinner dat I am," he howled, lamentably; "forgib me for locking yah up in de coal cellar; him didn't mean to do it, s'elp him golly, him didn't."

"I forgib yah," murmured Monday. "Hab yah got lilly drop ob rum?"

"Him got quart bottle full in the basket," returned Sunday.

The next moment the bottle was out and the mouth applied to the lips of the wounded man, who sucked at it greedily.

It seemed to agree with him very well.

"Have you got any water in that basket?" asked our hero presently.

"Lots, Massa Jack," replied Sunday, as he drew forth a stone jar.

Our hero pounced upon it like a young tiger, and drank till he could drink no longer.

We need not prolong this memorable scene.

Young Jack, with Sunday supporting our old friend Monday, reached the hotel late that night.

Monday was at once put to bed, and his wounds attended to.

There was no sleep for John Harkaway, senior, that night when he heard the hair-breadth escape of his boy from the two villains, Hunston and Toro.

CHAPTER II.

THE day—the happy day—was fixed.

Mr. Mole would fain have crept off to church on the extremely quiet.

But Harvey would not hear of this.

"No, no, Mr. Mole," he said, "you have done a noble action; you have shown yourself superior to all worldly weaknesses, and we are not going to sneak along now as if we were doing something to be ashamed of. You will soon have your third wife, and that alone shows you have great courage."

"Of course," replied Mr. Mole.

"And we are proud of you."

"Are you?"

"Yes, I think it is a noble action; one to be proud of."

"Is it?"

"Undoubtedly, Mr. Mole," added Harvey, with a look full of admiration at the tutor. "I regard you as reverent folks must have regarded the martyrs who sacrificed themselves at the stake for their principles."

Mr. Mole winced again.

"You sacrifice yourself," concluded Dick.

"Don't, Harvey, don't."

"I won't if you wish it, but it's true."

"You mean well and kindly, I know," said Mr. Mole.

"I do," returned Dick.

"Of course, but you have precious uncomfortable ways of expressing yourself at times."

"Dear me, I'm very sorry to hear that. But you must get ready to meet the bride. Here's your new coat."

"New coat!"

"Yes, I ordered one for you, for I supposed that you wouldn't care to be troubled by all these little details at such a time."

When Mr. Mole caught sight of the garment, his whole belief in Dick Harvey's seriousness was shattered.

"A bright blue coat with gilt buttons, and a green velvet collar!" he said; "it's a mistake."

"No," returned Harvey, "for here's the coat of yours I sent as the pattern garment, instead of bothering you to get measured."

"Do you want to make a laughing stock of me, Harvey?" exclaimed Mr. Mole.

"This is the latest fashion," replied Harvey.

"Why, it was getting old when I was a boy," said Mole; "the people would take me for some antiquated old fool."

"Sir!"

"A second edition of Rip Van Winkle, who had been boxed up asleep for twenty years, while the world was going on."

"Are you aware, Mr. Mole," said Harvey, in his most impressive manner, "that this was the fashion that the heir to the throne of Great Britain led at the last royal marriage in England?"

"Nonsense!"

"It is true."

Mr. Mole was silenced, and consented.

The wedding favours were something to remember, being of such abnormal proportions that they suggested reminiscences of the pantomime. Indeed they would have done credit to Dyk Wynkyn, if devised for the nuptial ceremony of King Uglimug the Oneth, or some such imaginary monarch.

All Dick's eloquence was, however, thrown away when he endeavoured to persuade Mr. Mole to cut off the trouser which covered his wooden leg, and festoon the leg itself with white satin ribbons.

Harkaway went to the wedding with Harvey in one carriage.

In the next carriage followed the two gentlemen of colour, the Prince of Limbi, *alias* Monday, and Cæsar Hannibal Augustus Constantine Jex, *alias* Sunday.

Now, perhaps, of the whole party it was Sunday who appeared to be the gayest.

Indeed, he seemed to have some special and secret reasons for mirth, for he could with difficulty repress a sort of incipient chuckle the whole morning through, and in his efforts to drown the cachinnations, he nearly swallowed one of his Berlin gloves.

The size being thirteens, this would have occasioned him some inconvenience.

Following the two gentlemen of colour was another carriage—last not least.

In this vehicle sat young Jack and Nero.

He had purposely taken the last carriage in order that they might not see him bring Nero out. Nero was in gorgeous array.

Young Jack had had a white satin waistcoat made for him on the sly, and a light blue coat, and a new cocked hat.

And what with his wedding favour, and a bouquet as large as a tea-tray, Nero was a very prominent feature in the procession.

Let us hope that no young ladies will read this chapter, or we fear that we shall get severely handled by the fair critics.

We have actually sketched roughly the appearance of the bridegroom and the wedding guests, even to Nero himself, and not a word has been said of the bride.

The blushing bride !

What would you say to learn that she looked the best of the party ?

Her wedding toilet had been the especial care of Emily and Hilda, and every thing she wore was simple, elegant, and in good taste.

There was the orthodox lace veil, which completely hid her dusky face from view ; and as her figure was good, many people who saw her envied Mr. Mole his bride.

Well, they might do worse, for under her black skin there beat one of the warmest and most generous of hearts.

The ceremony went off very satisfactorily, in spite of the presence of some high-spirited coloured persons of tender years, who raised a laugh by their antics at a most impressive moment during the service.

Monday was very fond of children, and he had a number of infantile pensioners, who joined the wedding party in church without receiving any special invite.

One of these was a boy of ten years of age, who was a most diverting young imp.

His name was Pompey Ball.

Master Pompey had two intimates with him of his own

stamp ; Julius Smith and his brother Pete, *ætat* nine ; besides a little bright-faced negress named Prissy.

Now this juvenile party appeared to be greatly diverted by the sight of the bridegroom's timber toe, and their mirth took such a noisy form that Sunday had to be told off to keep them in order.

Imitation is the highest flattery, it has been said.

Surely, then, the wedding party must have felt highly flattered in this instance, when little Pompey Ball performed in a comic manner the nuptial ceremony for Pete and little Miss Prissy.

Pompey's mimicry of the clergyman was perfect, and little Pete stood on one leg, holding a stick (to resemble Mr. Mole's wooden leg) with one hand, while he gave the other to Prissy, who looked as demure as a bride should.

Sunday was mightily tickled, but he pretended not to observe it until Julius, who could not restrain his laughter, burst into a loud guffaw that startled the whole party.

"How dare you, you imperent critters !" said Sunday, suddenly appearing to be outraged ; "take dat."

And he floored Master Julius with a slap on the head.

And this abruptly ended the little niggers' funny mimicry of Mr. Mole's nuptials.

Soon after Mr. Mole with his friends left the church, with his third black wife lovingly at his side, looking down with a smile of admiration at his wooden leg, young Jack having, unknown to Mr. Mole, turned up his trousers, and brought to view the wooden leg bound round with white satin ribbons.

The party had not got far on their journey home before young Jack shouted—

"Look out, Nero is after you."

The next moment the monkey came dashing full tilt at Mr. Mole.

Mr. Mole, hearing the shouts, turned round as quickly as any man could who had a wooden leg on one side of his body and a dusky bride on the other.

Nero was close upon him, and evidently mistook Mr. Mole's sudden turn for a hostile movement.

So, being unable to stop himself, the artful animal suddenly darted between the bridegroom's real leg and his

wooden substitute, intending by this method to get behind his enemy.

But Nero rose too suddenly, and the consequence was that Mr. Mole was thrown off his balance and on his back.

"Murder!" screamed the professor; "take the savage brute away! It is trying to steal my wooden leg."

"You had better get up and fight, Mr. Mole," said young Jack, "or Nero will run away with Mrs. Mole."

But Nero, however, was busy.

The gay ribbon with which Mr. Mole's timber prop had been decorated caught the animal's attention, and he resolved to secure it as a trophy of victory.

Nero's fingers or claws quickly untied the knot, and then, with a shrill squeal of triumph, he danced round his fallen foe, waving the bit of silk in the air, and finishing by hugging the bride as though he meant kissing her.

Some of the others, who were getting rather anxious about the matter of refreshments, deemed it time to interfere, so Mr. Mole was at once set up on his feet.

Nero would not part with the ribbon, which he fastened round his own leg, and thus decorated, followed the bridal procession.

And when they were safe home, there was the wedding breakfast, and the speeches, which was the occasion for Mr. Mole to distinguish himself, which he did.

On this one occasion, however, Mr. Mole was comparatively moderate in his cups, and when the rest were at the height of their merriment, he quietly withdrew with his bride.

CHAPTER III.

THE DUEL—MR. MOLE TO THE RESCUE.

BETWEEN the darkies, Sunday and Monday, there really existed a very strong feeling of affection, but which, however, they had their own peculiar manner of exhibiting.

Their attachment partook somewhat of the cat and dog quality.

Like those interesting domestic animals they were sometimes all fun and frolic one with the other.

At others they might be seen snapping and snarling, as though they were going to bite off each other's noses.

One morning they had got into one of their arguments. But this time it was neither one of nationality nor of politics.

It was entirely a personal matter.

The question started being—

Which of the two had rendered the most signal service on the eventful day when the "big spree" came off in the wood?

Monday declared "he had all to nuffin."

Sunday protested that "what he did licked Monday holler."

It seemed likely to prove a stiffish subject.

Our hero came up almost at the commencement of the discussion.

"Ah, here Massa Jack," cried Monday; "he settle de matter off hand."

"Ob course he will," exclaimed Sunday; "won't you, Massa Jack?"

"Certainly I will," Jack replied; "what is it?"

"We want to know who war de bess man on de day we had big fight in de wood," exclaimed Monday.

"I war," cried Sunday.

"No, I war," insisted Monday; "warn't I, Massa Jack?"

"You were both the best," answered our hero, with a laugh.

"No, dat not right, Massa Jack," returned Monday, shaking his head profoundly; "can't both be bess; one must be better dan de oder."

"Ob course," exclaimed Sunday, triumphantly, sticking out his chest; "dat me; I'm de one. 'Merican nigger lick all de oder niggers in creation into fits."

"No, you jess wrong; you de oder."

"Boo!"

"Yah!"

At this point of the argument the two disputants craned their necks till their noses touched, and made horrible grimaces at each other.

"What you mean let dose men catch hold and nearly kill Massa Jack, eh?" demanded Sunday at length.

"Dat your fault altogether, you black tief!" answered Monday.

"It dam lie, it yours, sar."

"How you make dat out, sar?"

"You ought to have looked arter him."

"Stop a minit, dar; didn't you lock dis child up in de coal cellar? Answer dat."

"Well, what if him did?"

"Why, how de debbil could him look arter Massa Jack same time him locked up in de coal cellar, you big pump?"

Monday chuckled intensely as he put this perplexing question.

His opponent, not being prepared with an answer, did not attempt any. He only growled—

"De coal cellar de bess place for ugly black nigger like you; if you stop dere, you'd not bin shot."

"If this child bin 'longside Massa Jack, he not bin tied up by de heels," retorted Monday.

"Bah! you no good! What you done when you lie on your back with you big mouth open, if I no gib you the rum, eh?"

"Him done widout, you ugly nigger."

"How you get out ob the wood if this child not carry you home on him back?"

"Him stop where him was, of course," replied Monday.

"And kick de bucket," sneered Sunday.

"Him kick you in a minit, if you talk like dat," exclaimed Monday, irritably.

"Kick me, you ugly black pudd'n?"

"Yes, kick you, you imperent tief!"

"What you mean call dis child imperent tief, eh, sar?"

"What you mean, call me ugly black pudd'n, eh, sar?"

"Bah!"

"Boo!"

Once more the irritated negroes grinned in each other's faces.

Young Jack came between them.

"You're a long time settling this matter," he said.

"Dat dam niggas dere insult me, Massa Jack," exclaimed Monday vehemently, as he pointed to his comrade.

"So he did," assented our hero; "I'm a witness."

"Dat dam niggar dere insult me too," cried Sunday, with equal intensity, pointing in his turn.

"No doubt of it," admitted the young referee, "I'm a witness to that also. You have both grossly insulted each other."

At this consoling piece of information the disputants ground their teeth and growled at each other.

"There's only one thing to be done to make things straight," continued our hero, in a magisterial manner.

"War dat, Massa Jack?" asked his sable listeners, eagerly.

"You must have satisfaction," said Jack, seriously.

"Dat's it; hab sat'msfacshun," echoed the niggers.

"Call each other out."

"Dat de sort; call each oder out!"

"Fight a duel!"

"Golly! dat proper! Fight um doo-el!" exclaimed the enthusiastic opponents.

"With pistols."

"Wid pistols!"

"Loaded."

"Gorra, yes; loaded."

"To the muzzle."

"Ob course; to de muzzle."

"With powder and bullets."

"Dat de sort; powder and lots of bullets."

"Then, when you've blown each other to bits, you'll be satisfied?" said our hero, rather solemnly.

"Perfec'ly, Massa Jack," replied Sunday.

"Yes, Massa Jack; when we hab blown each other to bits, we shall be satisfied," cried Monday. "But whar de poppers to come from?"

"And de powder and de bullets?" joined in Sunday.

"I'll provide every thing," replied Jack. "In an hour's time all will be ready. Meet me on this spot."

With these words they parted.

The two antagonists exulting in the joyful anticipation of annihilating each other.

Young Jack rejoicing in the prospect of the fun he was going to have.

Our hero commenced his preparations by borrowing (without asking, by-the-bye) a splendid pair of his dad's six-barrelled revolvers.

Together with a powder flask, and a bag in which to hold the bullets and a box of caps.

He then procured a couple of bullock's bladders, into each of which he put a handful of peas to make them rattle well, and a quantity of flour—to add to the general effect in the event of their bursting.

These he inflated, and having tied them on to the ends of two sticks, he gave them a coating of black lead.

Next he mixed some dough, and made a quantity of bullets out of this material, which he baked on the hob, giving each one a rub with the black lead to give it a natural appearance.

His warlike preparations being complete, his active mind suggested a plan by which his worthy tutor, Mr. Mole, should participate in the coming entertainment.

He accordingly sat down and wrote as follows:—

“Wednesday, 11 o'clock A.M.

“DEAR MR. MOLE,—I write in a terrible state of alarm to tell you that Sunday and Monday have had a dreadful quarrel, and are going to fight a duel. I have tried all I could to stop them, but they won't be stopped. They are both like savage tigers thirsting for each other's blood! As soon as you have read this, run (Jack, knowing how good Mr. Mole was on his wooden pin, chuckled intensely as he wrote this) as fast as you can to Crackshaw's Field, where you will find them firing away at one another. Your influence alone can stop this dreadful affair of blood.

“Yours in great anxiety,

“JACK.”

“TO ISAAC MOLE, ESQ.”

Having sealed the note and left directions that it should be given to Mr. Mole when he came in from his morning's walk, our hero went to look for the belligerent niggers.

He found them all ready.

Polished up and dressed in their best.

Their ebony faces glistened with delight at the peppering they fondly hoped they were going to give each other.

Forgetting that they were very likely to be peppered themselves at the same time.

As soon as their young master appeared they rushed to him.

"Am you got de poppers, Massa Jack?" they asked, eagerly.

"Certainly," replied our hero; "and a splendid pair they are, too. Look!"

As he spoke, he opened the leather case that contained them, and revealed them to Sunday and Monday.

The eyes of the darkies glistened.

Their mouths fairly watered at the sight.

"Dey am beauties! Dere no mistake 'bout dem," they exclaimed with intense admiration.

"Yes," said Jack, "and there's no mistake about the way in which they do their work either."

"Dey got six barrels apiece, too," chuckled Monday; "dat capital!"

"Rather," grinned Jack; "by the time you've fired a few rounds at one another, you'll both be as full of holes as the top of a pepper-box."

Sunday and Monday did not seem quite as rapturous as they might have been at the idea of this wholesale system of ventilation.

They scratched their woolly heads, looked first at their young master, who was whistling "Pop Goes the Weasel" very unconcernedly, and then at each other.

"Oh, golly!" thought Sunday, "if old Monday kill dis child, him not hab any more rum."

Monday was also in deep thought.

He was thinking, if Sunday shot him, he might make love to his wife Ada, and our old friend Monday did not relish the idea.

In fact, the thought was beginning to dawn upon them that they had been a little rash.

Perhaps Monday recollected the one bullet he had had extracted from his body.

If one bullet was so painful, what would a dozen or two be?

Monday did not feel happy.

But there was no time for reflection.

"It's time to start," cried Jack.

And away they went, but walked very slowly.

* * * * *

Sunday and Monday recovered their spirits during the journey.

They had snarled at each other all the way as they went, and by the time they arrived at the scene of operations, they had almost reached their former state of ferocious enthusiasm.

Every unpleasant allusion to the "tops of pepper-boxes" was forgotten, and they were only anxious to commence proceedings.

"We quite ready, Massa Jack," they said to our hero.

"I'm not," replied the latter; "before you can use the revolvers effectually, it is necessary that they should be loaded; and understand, gentlemen, they must be loaded with bullets."

"Certainly, Massa Jack," admitted the duellists.

Jack did not hurry himself over this operation.

He wished to lose as much time as possible, in order to give his respected tutor time to arrive just in the middle of the fun.

Consequently, he performed his task deliberately, the two anxious combatants watching him all the while with much interest.

"Dere go de powder," soliloquised Monday, as Jack poured the proper quantity of the combustive material into each barrel. "One, two, three, four, five, six; dat jess de number."

"Dere go de crushing caps," Monday continued, meaning percussion caps.

"Am all de leaden pills in?" murmured Sunday, as he watched his young master produce the bag containing the dough bullets.

"How many of these would you like in each?" asked Jack, as he shook a handful out of the bag.

The duellists reflected a moment.

They seemed very undecided on this point.

Jack came to their assistance.

"You can have any number you like," he said, suggestively; "one, two, or three; only say."

"How many you tink, Massa Jack?" asked Monday at length.

"Nay, it's for you to decide upon that," Jack replied, with a smile.

"How many you hab yourself if you war gwine to

fine in this noble fight?" inquired Sunday of his young master.

"That all depends where you let me have them. I should say three in the head would be enough," said young Jack.

"Tree in you head, eh, Massa Jack!" echoed Monday in a reflective tone. "Tree in each barrel, you mean, eh?"

"Of course. Will that number suit you?"

"What you tink, ole double smut?" Monday asked of his opponent. "Tree be enough in each barrel?"

"Him tink tree quite enough," growled the latter in reply.

"Him tink so himself," muttered Monday.

"Then you settle upon three?" asked Jack.

"Yes."

Our hero had now to perform a little feat of legerdemain. He carefully counted out the fictitious bullets in threes, and pretended to place them in the barrels; but, instead of doing so, he slipped them into his palm.

The lookers on, however, did not detect this.

After the ramming-down was completed, Jack looked anxiously across the field, hoping to catch a glimpse of the energetic Mole hurrying down to the scene of slaughter.

No signs, however, of the preceptor appearing, he approached the combatants.

"Here are your weapons," he said, as he placed the revolvers in their hands.

"Thank you, Massa Jack."

"Berry much 'bliged, Massa Jack," they exclaimed, each shutting one eye, and trying to squint down the barrels.

But our hero had stuffed a piece of paper in the ends, and they could see nothing.

"Gorra!" murmured the darkies, "dey loaded right bang slap up to de muzzle."

"That's a fact," returned Jack, with a cheerful laugh. "Don't look down the barrels, please," he added, in a tone of precaution; "if one happened to go off, the consequences might be serious; one charge is enough to blow your head off."

"Golly, yes, um tink so," exclaimed the sable pair, altering the positions of their weapons in double quick time.

"Well, now, I think we're all ready," said our hero. "You'd better take your places."

"Whar we to go to, Massa Jack?" they asked.

"I'll show you," answered the latter, as he placed them back to back; "but first I must ask you if you have considered where you would each like to be buried."

"No, Massa Jack, we hab not."

"That is very forgetful on your part," said Jack. "But have you ordered coffins for yourselves?"

"Coffins, sar?" cried Monday and Sunday, in a breath. "We don't want no coffins; we only want to fight like gentlemen."

"Very well. Now you'll walk away from each other as many paces as you like, and then stop," said our hero.

Away walked the darkies rapidly.

From the eagerness of their manner, and the tremendous strides they took, it seemed as though they were determined to get as far as they could from each other.

Young Jack stood shaking with laughter at seeing the niggers getting so far from each other.

At length, as they kept walking and walking on without evincing the least intention of coming to a halt, he bawled—

"Hollo! how many miles are you going before you stop?"

"Um didn't know we got to stop," they bawled back.

"Oh! yes, you ought to have stopped long ago. Come back."

They returned, and stood back to back, as before.

"Now start again. Count six paces, and then stop."

They took a timid glance at each other's pistols, and off they went.

"One, two, tree, seben, nine, six," they counted.

Perhaps it was excitement made them a little erratic in their numeration.

"Stop! That will do very well," remarked Jack, scarcely able to control his mirth.

"Golly, massa," murmured Sunday, as he glanced over his shoulder at his opponent, who seemed to him unpleasantly near, "de distance berry short."

"Short!" exclaimed our hero; "that's the proper distance. What's the use of firing at each other a mile off? There's no fun in it at all."

"But dis rader too near, Massa Jack, don't you think so?" continued Sunday.

"Specially as de poppers got three three dozen bullets in each barrel," uted Monday.

"Only three, you donkey, not three dozen," corrected Jack; "but there," he added, "if you're afraid, you can take two steps more, but not another inch."

"Dis child not 'fraid," returned Monday, indignantly.

"No, more dis child neider," echoed his opponent.

But they both availed themselves of their young master's permission, and took two more strides, good long ones too.

"Now then, are you ready?" cried Jack.

"Iss, massa."

"Listen to me, then," continued our hero, in an authoritative tone.

"Iss, Massa Jack."

"You will please remember your weapons have six barrels."

"Iss, Massa Jack."

"Each of which contains three bullets."

"Iss, Massa Jack," was the somewhat shaky reply.

"Consequently," our hero went on, "you will have six shots, and discharge eighteen bullets in the first round."

"Iss, massa."

"When we begin to pop?" asked Sunday, nervously.

"When I give the signal, you must take steady aim at each other's heads," Jack replied; "and I want you to be very particular about that."

"Iss, Massa Jack," responded the tyros.

"What am de signal?"

"The signal I shall give you," said our hero, very emphatically, "will be knock 'em both down, Mr. Mole. Can you recollect that?"

"Certainly um can," replied the darkies, in considerable perturbation of ideas. "'Knock down Massa Mole.'"

"No, no," laughed Jack. "'Knock 'em both down, Mr. Mole.'"

"Ah, iss. 'Knock 'em bote down, Massa Mole,'" repeated the belligerents.

"That's it," returned our hero, "don't forget that. Whenever you hear me say these words, fire away as hard as you can till I cry 'stop!'"

There was a dead silence for a moment.

"Attention, ready!" said Jack.

"All—right—Massa Jack," stammered the bloodthirsty duellists.

Another slight pause, and then—the signal.

"Knock 'em both down, Mr. Mole," shouted our hero.

Both the combatants shut their eyes simultaneously.

Up went their two arms in the air with the revolvers at the end of them.

Both pulled their triggers.

But there was no report.

"Hollo, hollo!" cried Jack, "what's the meaning of that?"

"Um tink dere someting de matter wid de poppers," said the combatants, opening their eyes in astonishment.

"Let me see," said our hero, rather impatiently, as he stepped forward.

"Why, you've neither of you cocked your weapons," he exclaimed.

"No more 'em hab," admitted the duellists.

"Don't forget that again, if you please," enjoined Jack, rather sternly; "it's important."

"No, massa, um sure not to forget," they replied, as they pulled back the hammers of the revolvers.

"Now, then, once more—ready? Knock 'em both down, Mr. Mole," shouted our hero, for the second time.

The same process was repeated as before.

The duellists shut their eyes raised their revolvers, and then pulled their triggers.

This time they went off.

Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang!

"Golly, dey beginning to go now anyhow," muttered the combatants, as they fired right up in the air.

Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang bang!

At the two last reports our hero, who was prepared, let fly a handful of the dough bullets he had made at the heads of the duellists.

The miniature dumplings came with a sharp, stinging sensation against their foreheads.

The effect was electric.

"Oh, gorra mussy, him brains blowed out!" yelled Sunday, as his legs gave way under him and he rolled on the grass.

"Dat nigger got no brains to blow out," laughed Monday.

Jack, feeling inclined to burst with laughter, walked forward, and picking up the revolvers, began coolly to reload them.

During this operation, the wounded heroes ceased their lamentations, and sitting upon the grass, contemplated one another rather curiously.

They had certainly felt the bullets strike them.

Yet there was no blood to be seen, and the momentary sting had passed away.

"How you feel, broder smut?" asked Monday at length of his comrade.

"Him don't feel much de wus, ole son," Sunday answered. "How you feel yourself?"

"Him feel jess de same as you feel," Monday replied.

"Rather faint, eh?" said Jack, cheerfully, as he came up to them. "That's nothing, considering you've got a couple of bullets in each of your skulls."

"Golly, Massa Jack!" they gasped, putting up their hands together and instituting a vigorous search on their frontal regions.

"Um don't feel no holes," remarked Monday, at length.

"No, the bullets have stopped them up," replied our hero. "You're all right for another round. Here, catch hold of your shooters."

The combative pair looked rather dismayed as Jack thrust the weapons into their hands, but they were ashamed to decline them.

"Now then," cried our hero; "time! Up with you, and remember, when I give the signal again, don't shut your eyes, and fire at each other instead of in the air."

The combatants again took their places.

Jack was about to give the signal.

Suddenly a voice was heard shouting in the distance—

"Stop the duel; stop it—it is murder. I forbid it."

"It was Mr. Mole, who was scudding along with all sails set towards the scene of action, his hat stuck on the back of his head, and his coat tails flying behind him.

"Stop, stop!" he cried, as he came waddling up to the spot, puffing and blowing like an asthmatic old goose.

"I can't allow murder to be done ; it's against the law," he gasped, as he rushed between the combatants.

"Put down your deadly weapons, you benighted savages," he continued, excitedly.

"Um shan't do noting ob de sort, Massa Mole," returned Monday.

"You won't?" shrieked Mole.

"No, um won't, um see yah blowed fuss. Get out ob de way, and let us go on wid de shooting."

But the noble-minded Isaac would not get out of the way.

"I see nothing but strong moral influence will do here," he muttered to himself.

Then addressing himself once more to the refractory niggers, he continued—

"My poor misguided friends, hear me. Listen, you smutty-faced vil—no, I mean my dearly-beloved brethren, I insist on your putting an end to this unnatural strife."

"If you don't stand out ob de way, Massa Mole, um put an end to you, s'elp um golly, um will," growled Sunday.

"Pray retire, Mr. Mole," pleaded Jack in a tone of intense anxiety ; "don't endanger yourself."

"No, my dear pupil," returned the pious Isaac, firmly, "never will I shrink from my duty. No ; they may kill me, but I will not stand by and see murder done."

"But consider your precious life," entreated our hero, with tears of irrepressible mirth in his eyes ; "do, pray, consider your precious life ; consider your young and lovely wife."

But the noble-minded man, with Spartan firmness, refused to consider any thing.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself, you two," cried Jack to the negroes, in an assumed tone of strong indignation, but feeling at the same time inclined to burst with laughter ; "if I was Mr. Mole, I'd let you know who I was."

"So I will," exclaimed that heroic individual, as he drew off his coat, and proceeded to tuck up his sleeves ; "I'll let 'em know who I am."

"That's right," cried Jack, encouragingly, as he shook a handful of the dough bullets out of the bag into his palm.

And then he shouted enthusiastically—

"Knock 'em down, Mr. Mole."

"Dat de signal," muttered the darkies, who began instantly to fire away.

Bang, bang, went the revolvers in the most lively manner possible.

Whizz went a shower of small dumplings from Jack's hand in the face of the bewildered Mole, who, fully believing he was shot, clapped his hands over his eyes, roaring with all his might—

"Oh, murder, murder!"

Jack, to add to the fun of the fight, fired a pistol close to Mr. Mole's ear, and just at the same moment the monkey started forward.

Bang, bang!

"I'm being assassinated!" yelled Mole, falling.

Bang, bang!

"Murder."

Bang, bang! and another shower of dough from Jack. Down went Mr. Mole to the ground.

"I'm a murdered man, I'm a corpse. What will Mrs. Mole do without her Mole?" he groaned.

"She do bery well," shouted Sunday.

Jack rushed up eagerly to his preceptor.

"Are you hurt much, sir?" he asked.

"Hurt much?" wailed the unhappy sufferer. "I'm mortally wounded; about twenty shots in my head. Can't you see that?"

"Oh, dear, where—in your head?" inquired our hero, in a tone of well-assumed horror.

"I don't know," gasped Mr. Mole, "everywhere. Oh, oh! my life blood's ebbing away rapidly; I feel it is; send for the doctor."

Mr. Mole was carried by the two negroes to a little distance, and placed with his back against a tree, moaning piteously.

"I don't see any blood, sir," said Jack, presently.

"I'm bleeding inwardly," gurgled the tutor, in a hollow tone; "my end is fast approaching."

"It will be a great comfort to you, sir, to reflect that you died in the cause of duty," remarked our hero, soothingly.

Mr. Mole made a very wry face at this consoling suggestion.

"I don't see it in that light at all," he replied, dolefully ; "I've no wish to die just at present, and—and I have only been married to my third wife a few days."

He stopped suddenly, and pulled Jack down close to him.

"Have the goodness to put your hand into the right pocket of my coat tail," he whispered to him faintly ; "you'll find a—a——"

"Wound, sir?"

"No, a small flask of rum ; I think a little will revive me."

The flask was speedily produced, and placed to Mr. Mole's lips.

While he was drinking, a fresh outbreak took place.

Sunday and Monday, having exhausted all their ammunition, and not being able to fire at each other any more, had opened the bag in which our hero had secreted the bladders and sticks.

These they had brought forth, and were banging one another about the head and face to their hearts' content.

"Do you see that, Mr. Mole?" cried Jack, with pretended indignation. "Look at those fellows."

The tutor looked.

"Unfeeling wretches," he murmured, "still engaged in a sanguinary conflict ; at this awful moment, too !"

"Yes, sir," Jack replied.

"What are they fighting with?" demanded Mr. Mole, who was considerably mystified at the peculiarity of the weapons and the strange rattling noise they made.

"Two war clubs, of the wild tribe of the copper-coloured Crackskulls," exclaimed our hero, very seriously.

"Never heard of them," muttered the preceptor, as he took a pull at his rum flask.

"There'll be more murder done, I'm afraid," continued Jack, apprehensively, as the bladders and the peas rattled away on the heads and noses of the combatants.

"Couldn't you use your influence, sir, to stop that dreadful fight?" he asked, in a tone of earnest entreaty ; "it would be a noble act for your last."

The expiring Mole turned up his eyes, and the rum bottle at the same time to his lips, and emptied it.

Then he replied, magnanimously—

"Yes, it would be a noble act; an act worthy of a man and a brother. I will do it. Be kind enough to help me up."

Jack set him on his legs; which the rum had made rather unsteady, and the large-hearted Mr. Mole set off in a very zigzag fashion towards the combatants.

"Dark-skinned sons of the—hic—tropics," he exclaimed, solemnly, as he reached them, "forbear! Isaac Mole stands before you."

The tropical individuals took no notice whatever of the grand appeal, being far too deeply engrossed in their interesting amusement.

Bang, rattle, went the bladders on the heads of the players.

Mr. Mole began to feel his great soul stirred within him.

"Desist, sanguinary monsters, I—hic—command ye!" he continued, energetically.

Still not the slightest attention was paid to Mole.

Bang, rattle—rattle, bang, responded the bladders on the heads of Sunday and Monday.

At length Mole's patience was exhausted, and taking a good aim, he rushed in between them.

"Block-headed pigs!" he shouted; "lay down your weapons! in the name of the great American Republic, I order you to——"

Bang, rattle, on Mr. Mole's head.

"Wretches!"

Rattle, bang, on Mr. Mole's nose.

"Scoundrels! Ruffians!"

Bang, rattle—rattle, bang, fell the bladders like hailstones on Mr. Mole's head, nose, ears, eyes, and every part of the upper region of his anatomy. Loudly he yelled—

"I shall be murdered! Oh, my poor wife, what will she do without me?" (Rattle, bang.) "Help!" (Bang, rattle.) "Police!" (Rattle bang.) "Jack, assist me, for" (bang, rattle.) "for mercy's sake! Oh, my poor" (rattle, bang) "head!" (Bang, rattle.) "My skull's" (rattle, bang) "fractured!"

At this juncture, and as a grand windup to the whole, both the bladders went off with a tremendous pop.

Down went Mr. Mole again upon his mother earth,

smothered in flour and deluged with a shower of peas, looking like the ghost of a departed clown, and firmly impressed with the idea that his brains had been knocked out by the war clubs of the copper-coloured Crack-skulls.

Jack, almost in convulsions of laughter, which he was obliged to control the best way he could, rushed to assist his respected tutor.

It was some time before he could convince him that he was not mortally wounded.

But having at length succeeded in impressing him with this conviction, Mole was hoisted once more on to his legs.

Sunday and Monday had already shaken hands, and made up their quarrel ; and, at our hero's suggestion, they apologised very humbly to the discomfited Mole.

This soothed his ruffled feelings considerably, and finding another flask of rum in the left pocket of his tail coat, he speedily grew very hilarious, insisting upon riding home on Monday's shoulders, singing as he went, in a somewhat inebriate and disreputable manner—

“ For we are jolly good—hic—fellows,
And so say all of us.”

The niggers and young Jack joined in chorus, and all went well until Monday, getting a little excited, stumbled over his comrade's foot and pitched the jovial Mole off his perch head first into a ditch.

The ditch was half full of water, but the worthy tutor was dragged out by his boots before he had swallowed a couple of quarts.

But it stopped his singing for that day, and when he reached the hotel, he was glad to sneak in by the back way, and upstairs to his room as quietly as possible.

Having reached this, he went at once to bed, ordered hot water bottles to his feet, and drank rum and water till further notice, to neutralise the effect of his immersion in the ditch.

Young Jack detailed the whole affair to his father, who could not help laughing heartily at the recital, although, at the same time, he shook his head reprovingly at his mischief-loving offspring.

"Never mind, dad," was the excuse he received ; "I only do as you did when you were a boy."

CHAPTER LIV.

THE Bowery gang had not yet got clear from the detectives.

Toro and Hunston were still prowling about disguised, watching the movements of Harkaway and Harvey, and waiting to see the result of what they thought young Jack's cruel death.

The "Independence," the ship they intended sailing off in, had not yet weighed anchor.

They were waiting for one more hand to make up the crew.

This hand was not a professional sailor.

There was, however, a weighty reason for waiting for this hand.

Several of the crew who had influence with Clemmans, the captain of the ship, had persuaded him to wait for this passenger.

It was altogether a strangely-mixed crew that served on board the "Independence," and Captain Clemmans cared not for testimonials of honesty and good conduct ; he only wanted their credentials to speak for their daring and bravery.

The missing man that they were waiting for answered thoroughly well all these requirements.

The influential members of the crew were Hunston and Toro, and their worthy companions from the den in The Bowery.

The man that they were waiting for was Robert Emmerson.

Delays, however, were dangerous.

They little thought how great that danger was.

There was, however, a certain clannish bond between those lawless men ; and although they would one and all have felt infinitely easier in their minds out at sea, they could not endure the idea of weighing anchor while Protean Bob was absent.

Could they have known any thing about him, it would have sufficed.

But, as it was, they only knew that Robert Emmerson had slunk out of their den one night, bound upon a foraging expedition in their service, and that he had not returned.

They thought it very likely that he had come to grief in their service.

They had the greatest confidence in Protean Bob's powers, but this long-continued silence thoroughly alarmed all of them.

So Hunston and Toro resolved to go ashore disguised in search of him.

They knew thoroughly well the haunts he used.

At any rate, they thought they would be likely to learn some news of their daring and adventurous comrade.

With this purpose they came ashore separately, and made by different routes for a meeting place agreed upon beforehand.

This meeting place was a low drinking bar, frequented by some of the roughest characters.

While here they got into a dispute with a queer, hulking-looking fellow, who was apparently a freshly-landed emigrant in search of employment, and so hot grew the discussion that it looked as though they were coming to blows.

The fellow had got a precious ugly look, and although he said little, they were on their guard against accidents when they saw him put his hand behind him, as though he was about to whip out a bowie or a six-shooter.

Whether it was that the cantankerous fellow was not pleased with the chance of an encounter with a man of Toro's build, or whether it was that he did not like the idea of tackling two of them, we cannot say.

Certain it is, that he slunk out of the bar without a word.

"He's an evil-eyed cuss," remarked a stranger casually.

"That he is."

"More brag than breeches," remarked another.

Just then back came the quarrelsome emigrant, and stooping, he picked up a paper at Hunston's feet.

"You dropped this," he said.

And once more he vanished.

Hunston turned the paper over and over in his hand.

"I don't think I did," he said.

And then he was about to throw it away, when a scrap of writing on it caught his eye.

This was the scrap—

"It is imprudent to lose your temper in a bar. Keep down your bile till you reach the corner of Canal Street, where a friend may accost you."

Hunston changed colour.

What could it mean?

He consulted with Toro about it.

"The writer of that letter knows us," said Toro at once.

"Do you think so?"

"I am sure."

"It certainly looks like it," said Hunston, thoughtfully.

"It is as sure as we are here," said Toro; "how can you doubt it for an instant?"

"Who do you think it comes from, then?" asked the other. "Friend or foe?"

"Friend, most likely," replied the giant, after a moment's consideration.

"Why a friend?"

"Foe can only point to Pike and Nabley."

"Granted."

"They would never write so as to put us upon our guard," remarked Toro.

"True."

Talking it over in this way, they wandered out of the drinking bar, and on through the streets, until they came to Canal Street.

The part at this precise moment was quite deserted.

But not for long.

They had, in fact, been scarcely five minutes there when the seedy-looking loafer from whom they had received the letter came up.

They eyed him suspiciously at first, and both kept their hands in their pockets, holding tightly by the deadly weapons they carried, ready for any emergency.

The manner of this seedy personage was, however, very different now from what it had been in the drinking bar.

There it had been cringing and insolent by turns.

Here it was neither one nor the other.

A quick glance about him on all sides satisfied him apparently that they were unobserved.

Then, in a low but animated voice, he said—

“Hunston—Toro! What, forgotten and so soon?”

The man's manner startled them considerably.

“Who are you?”

“Can't you guess?” he replied, with a laugh.

“What are you fooling for?” exclaimed the Italian, impatiently. “Why beat about the bush so?”

The stranger laughed at this outburst.

It needed little to raise the ire of the fierce Italian, as you know, and in an instant he had whipped out his revolver and presented it at the mysterious one's head, with a loud imprecation.

“Speak!”

Hunston knocked up his hand contemptuously.

“Don't be a fool, Toro. What good can that do?”

“What indeed?” added the stranger, laughing still in the most provoking manner.

“Speak, then!”

“No threats.”

“We don't wish to threaten you,” said Hunston.

“Indeed. But it looks remarkably like it.”

“Take no notice of that, then, but say who you are?”

“I will not.”

Out came Toro's pistol again.

“Judge for yourselves,” continued the stranger, removing his hat.

And then, in an instant, to their intense surprise, they recognised Robert Emmerson—so aptly named Protean Bob.

Yes, there was no mistaking his identity now.

But how changed he was.

How pale—how wan and haggard he had become in those few days.

And small wonder.

He had been skulking about, afraid to show himself in daylight in spite of his aptitude in disguising himself, so fatally hot had the pursuit of him become.

Perpetually worried and harassed, he had grown to be afraid of his own shadow.

In every street he met the officers of the law upon the hunt; in every house where he had been known, and where he could have obtained assistance, he found suspicious-looking men hanging about on the watch.

Matters, indeed, had reached such an alarming pitch with him that he was fearful of buying food with the money he had plundered from the murdered Garcia, and thus, with a small fortune upon his person, he had actually felt the pangs of hunger.

Saul Garcia, the murdered Jew, was already *partly* avenged.

Aye, and Garcia's friend Sol, the Jew, and the murdered London detective, Nabley's brother, all slain by Emmerson, were yet to be bitterly avenged.

"Emmerson!"

"Bob!"

Such were their exclamations on recognising their infamous associate.

"Hush!"

"What now?"

"Don't bawl my name about so," said Emmerson, looking around nervously.

"There's no danger."

"More danger than you know of."

"Stuff!" said Hunston, impatiently; "you're growing timorous in your old age, Emmerson. There's no one near here to listen to anything we may have to say."

"I can't be too careful," said Emmerson; "the police are as plentiful after me now as stones in the street. Day and night I am hunted after, and can find no rest anywhere. My life, I tell you, is a misery to me. I wish," he added, with a despairing look, "I wish I was dead and buried."

His comrades in villany looked at each other in mute surprise.

They could not believe that Robert Emmerson was afflicted by any thing like remorse.

Still less could they regard him as a man who was scared by fear to such a miserable state of irritation and nervousness.

Yet such was the case.

The wretched man, his hands yet reeking with murder, had spoken his real sentiments, without a word of ex-

aggreration, in saying that he wished himself dead and buried.

His life was indeed a misery to him now.

There was no rest for him in mind or body.

Emmerson was a haunted man.

By day he skulked and hid away in mortal dread of being seen ; by night he dreamt, when he had the good fortune to sleep, and dreamt horribly, of how the old Jew fought for his life. His visions were always the same.

Eternally he was back with his struggling victim enacting that horrible death-fight, going through every part of that hideous tragedy, in which every detail was presented before his fevered brain with a vividness and reality that were appalling.

Was not Saul Garcia, then, already avenged on his murderer?

"How did you get away?" he asked presently.

"By digging upwards," was Hunston's reply.

"Upwards!"

"Yes."

"How?"

They explained then what they had done, and went into their adventures generally with The Bowery gang.

"In the house above," said Hunston, "we came across Captain Clemmans——"

"Was he living there?"

"Yes."

"Confound it! If I had only known that, what a deal of trouble I might have saved."

"Well, the skipper is a decent sort of fellow."

"A bold man," said Toro, which was the highest praise that he could award anyone.

"He is that."

"Yes," said Hunston ; "and we are only waiting to get off—so you can guess the result."

"I can."

"We man his ship."

"And did you all get clean off?"

"Yes, through the secret way Clemmans took us."

"Where are the others?"

"On board."

"When do you start?"

"As soon as our crew is complete ; we are only waiting for one man."

"And he is——"

"Robert Emmerson," replied Hunston.

They shook hands warmly over this.

The wretched fugitive felt a relief at hearing this which is beyond description. He had been depressed, overwhelmed with a sense of utter loneliness, ever since that dread night of murder.

Crusoe upon his desert island had felt happy and cheerful in comparison with Emmerson, who prowled about in the midst of crowds and yet alone.

And so far had this sense of desolation crept over him, that the revulsion of feeling gave him a great desire to shed tears.

CHAPTER V.

BURIED ALIVE.

SINCE the fearful attack made on young Jack in the woods by Hunston and Toro, he had received strict instructions from his father never again to venture out of the town or leave the hotel without a protector.

Jack's courage would have taken him anywhere, but he would not disobey orders, so he prevailed on Dick Harvey one evening to take a stroll with him and Nero.

Dick Harvey, wishing for a walk, at once consented.

"Well, Jack, if you promise to be good and not run away, I will go with you."

"All right, sir, off we go. Come, Nero, old boy, you shall have a run with us."

"Stop," said Harvey ; "here comes your father ; ask his permission before we start."

"What are you up to, eh, Jack ?" asked Harkaway.

"I wish to have a stroll, dad, and Mr. Harvey says he will come with me, if you will permit me to go."

"Very well, Jack," replied his father, "I know you will be safe with my old friend Dick ; so off with you."

* * * * *

Emmerson was all eagerness to proceed on board at once.

They walked in single file through the town towards the spot where they were to take the water and go on board.

As they were walking along, they came across a sight that surprised them.

A youth was strutting arm-in-arm with a big monkey dressed up in gorgeous array, and close by their side walked a gentleman.

"Keep back!" suddenly cried Hunston. "See there! Do you recognise the boy?"

"Can it be the young cub we thought we had done for in the woods?" replied the giant, starting with surprise.

"It is Harkaway's son, young Jack Harkaway, by all that's evil," whispered Hunston.

"Then he must have escaped our vengeance. Why did you not let me, when he was hanging, put a bullet in him?" growled Toro. "And look; there is his infernal monkey. Do you remember him?"

Hunston had more reason to recollect Nero than his companion, for he had suffered severely from his claws upon the occasion of their last meeting.

"Curse Harkaway!" exclaimed Hunston, turning to Emmerson; "he's the author of all our troubles."

"All. I remember his visit to our gaming-house."

"May he die miserably," said Toro.

"I wish we could make him," said Hunston, with his old vicious chuckle. "But he and his crew seem to lead a charmed life."

Hunston might well say so, for he had tried all that villany could devise, and audacity carry out, to put an end to his old and redoubtable foes. But Jack Harkaway had been too much for him.

He was a ticklish customer, was Jack.

Meantime, the latter's son walked on, all unconscious of danger, by the side of Harvey, and Nero swaggered as much, or more, than his master.

A hurried conversation took place between the three villains, and then their consultation speedily assumed shape.

A terrible shape too, alas! for young Jack.

"Who will attack the man?" asked Emmerson.

"I will," cried Toro. "Wait till we get him with no one near, and this shall settle him for a time."

And Toro pulled from his coat pocket a large life-preserver.

"See," whispered Hunston, "they've turned down that dark lane; now's your time."

Toro the giant was some distance from Harvey, but he swung round his head the life-preserver, and then it went flying through the air straight at Harvey's head.

With a deep groan Dick fell to the ground, but rising on his arm, he cried—

"Fly, Jack, my boy, we are attacked."

The next moment Toro was upon him, and with one heavy blow of his fist, Harvey fell like a dead man.

Hunston stole after the boy, carrying his cape in his hand.

And, just as young Jack was about to turn round, the cape was thrown over his head, and he was held in a vice-like embrace.

Nero bolted.

The sudden assault startled the monkey at first, and he squeaked most discordantly.

In fact, such a precious row did he kick up that they began to be afraid that attention might be attracted by it, and therefore a hurried attempt was made to secure Master Nero.

But the latter was not to be caught.

"What shall we do with this fellow?" asked Toro.

"Let him remain where he is," said Hunston, brutally kicking poor, helpless Harvey. "Now let us away."

Young Jack was hurried along for some distance, and then dragged into an empty, half-finished dwelling.

Not till then was the cape removed.

The prisoner glanced about him nervously.

The place was certainly familiar to him.

This was little to be wondered at—very little, for in this very room young Jack had before been in a sorry predicament.

It is needless to recall to the reader's mind that terrible affray in the street in which poor Isaac Mole came to grief, and wherein the unhappy Harry Girdwood was done to death by that butcher Toro.

Now they had Jack once more alone!

No fear of interruption this time.

Their purpose was then to complete what they had begun before.

What this purpose was would have puzzled a looker-on at this stage of the proceedings, for Toro began operations by pulling away the brickwork by the half-finished chimney.

Young Jack saw all.

Prayers, tears, remonstrances, the boy knew well would avail him little with these men.

He was as brave as a young lion, too, and humble pie was a species of diet that he was little used to.

"Ready for him now?" asked Hunston.

"Yes."

"Put him inside, then, Emmerson, and don't fail in having your revenge this time."

"I wish his accursed father was here, too," said Toro.

"That's a lie!" retorted young Jack, quickly.

"Silence!"

"You know it is a lie," added the fearless boy. "If my father were here, you'd be all shaking in your shoes with fright."

Toro made a savage slap at the speaker, which young Jack dodged nimbly.

"If your father was here, he'd be treated the same as you," said Hunston; "he's a cur, and he'll suffer yet."

"You know that is idle lying," said young Jack; "you've felt the weight of his arm often enough."

"Hold your noise," thundered Hunston, furiously.

"It is true."

"You lie!"

"I don't? You know you have begged your life when you had no right whatever to expect mercy, and he has granted it; and you know how you have turned upon him always, and repaid him by more treachery."

"I'll cut your tongue out."

"You tried that on with my father," said young Jack, and it did not succeed."

"But we are alone here, and I do not see why I should not at once kill you," said Hunston, pulling out his long thin dagger.

"He may escape again like he has from the hanging

business," cried Toro ; " therefore I say let the boy be killed. It will make sure."

" Oh, you are bold fellows, I know," said the boy, with a sneer. " I escaped from the woods, and something tells me I shall again escape."

" Silence ! " roared Hunston.

" You'll not escape," said Toro, " for you'll never see mortal face again. So, you young vermin, death is near you. Tremble ! "

" Don't know how," retorted young Jack ; " it's an item in the education of the Harkaways which has been totally neglected."

In the tussle of wits young Jack was clearly their master.

They waited no longer, but seized him and dragged him to the chimney to thrust him in.

Young Jack offered no resistance whatever.

It would have been useless, as he well knew.

Once there, in that narrow aperture, one of them held a pistol at his head, while Toro set actively to work with trowel and mortar and bricks.

And now it became apparent what fiend-like villany they contemplated.

Bricking him up !

Consigning the young and hapless boy to a living tomb !

And, in all this, what caused them the greatest disappointment was to find their victim fearless and undaunted as ever.

They knew well that he realised the full danger of his position, for his sharp tongue told of keen wit.

Yet, whatever he felt, he kept it well to himself.

They knew how dreadfully he had suffered when tied up by the heels in the wood, and they counted this time upon tears, and cries, and prayers for mercy.

Imagine, therefore, how great was their disappointment.

And still the bricking-up continued.

The wall which was closing up before young Jack was two bricks deep, and of a solidity which would certainly defy his efforts to free himself.

Young Jack kept a calm exterior, but he felt a sickening dread creeping over him.

Brick by brick his doom was being consummated.

A death far too horrible to contemplate.

But he did not mean to let them see his fear in his face.

He was keeping his eyes open for any chance which might offer, and presently he thought that he saw one.

Hunston was standing close by the aperture, and out from his breast-pocket the hilt of a knife appeared, just within reach.

Young Jack was at it in a jiffy.

He reached it, too, and in the self-same effort made a stab at Hunston, which had very nearly taken effect.

But Emmerson knocked up his hand sharply.

Down fell the knife with a clatter upon the floor, and young Jack received a cruel slap in the face, which sent him reeling back, bleeding at the mouth and nostrils.

At the same instant Nero made his appearance at the door but suddenly disappeared as Toro threw a brick at him, shouting—

“There’s that brutal monkey again.”

The monkey bounded away grinning.

But Nero was soon back, and pouncing upon Hunston’s knife, he darted across the room.

And then followed an exciting chase, all in favour of the monkey ; who was here, there, and everywhere in a trice.

“We had better shoot him, I think,” said Toro.

“No, no.”

“Why not?”

“The noise would alarm the neighbourhood.”

“True.”

“The best idea would be to brick him up with the brat.”

“True, true,” cried the other two in a breath.

“They will enjoy it all the more,” said Hunston, “and perhaps they will gnaw each other when the pangs of hunger grow rather more pressing than pleasant.”

“I should like to watch the accursed brat’s face then,” said Toro, in fiendlike glee.

“So should I.”

“But, happily, we shall be far away from New York, upon the ocean, I hope by then. Now for the monkey.”

They spread out, and drove Nero into a corner.

But Nero was not to be caught so easily.

Just as they thought they had hold of him, he sprang up and bobbed past them.

Then, with a bound, he flew to the chimney and joined his unfortunate young master.

As the last brick was being placed, Hunston called through the small aperture to young Jack—

“Will you beg for mercy?”

“No.”

“Will you sue to us for forgiveness?”

“No.”

“Once more, for the last time, will you beg for your life?”

“Never. You thought you had destroyed me in the woods, but I am here. I do not fear you, and will not beg of you my life,”

“Quite right, boy; you would not have got it.”

“Finish,” said Toro, impatiently; “he is bragging as much he did in the woods.”

The last brick was placed.

The deed was done.

And thus was young Jack Harkaway consigned living to the grave.

CHAPTER VI.

MR. MOLE AS A STUMP ORATOR.

MR. MOLE and his bride took the first train for Boston, and thence he proceeded to Harkaway's plantation, where he was to spend a brief honeymoon with his dusky bride.

In attendance upon the “young couple” were the brace of blackbirds, Messieurs Sunday and Monday.

They had both been duly coached up by Dick Harvey before starting, and they had made up their minds for fun with the newly-married pair—with the bridegroom especially.

As soon as they arrived at the plantation, a grand general assembly of the coloured population was called by Sunday and Monday.

The meeting was settled to take place in a large barn,

and Monday was of opinion that it would be better for it to take the character of a farewell lecture.

Accordingly a temporary platform was raised.

A table or desk was placed upon it, and duly provided with the orthodox water-bottle, glass, and hand-bell.

The hand-bell was to invite silence when the lecturer should be ready.

Mrs. Mole was seated in the front, close by the lecturer's desk, and by the way in which she exchanged nods and glances with Sunday, it looked as if they were on strangely familiar terms.

Presently there was a general hush ; then a burst of applause, which rang through the barn.

Mr. Mole stumped gracefully on to the platform.

"Bravo, Massa Mole," shouted the niggers and negresses, lustily. "Bravo, sar !"

Mr. Mole bowed his acknowledgments.

Then he turned to Sunday, who had followed him on to the platform.

Sunday had evidently some official duties to perform here, for he began by ringing the bell to call for silence.

Then he cleared his voice with rather more ostentation than was precisely necessary.

"Ladies an' gemmen, an' specially gals ob de coloured persuasion," he began, with an elegant wave of the hand.

"Bravo, Sunday !" screamed the audience.

Mr. Mole looked rather indignant.

Was he to lecture, or was Sunday ?

That was the question he had to ask himself.

Sunday bowed gracefully and continued—

"I hab de extinguished honour ob introducing my brudder Mole."

"Drop the brother," said Mr. Mole, audibly.

"I repeat, ladies an' gemmen, of introducing my brudder Mole," continued Sunday ; "an' ladies an' gemmen, it's twice de pleasure to introduce a man an' a brudder when he is such a brudder."

"What are you driving at, Sunday ?" exclaimed Mr. Mole, growing impatient. "I wish you would be a little less familiar in your manner."

"What for, Massa Mole ?"

"What for, you ignorant nigger ?"

"Yes, Massa Mole."

"Because I don't care to be brothered all over the place by you. It's all very well to call a black pudding like you a man and a brother ; it's all very well, I say in a speech, or in a sentimental song, or in a book. It's a sort of sentimental figure of speech, you understand, that's invented in some tract ; for, of course, a black doll—a male Aunt Sally like you,—can't very well be a brother of mine."

"Oh, I can't !"

"Of course not."

"Sure ?"

"Don't talk stuff."

"Come here, Chloe," said Sunday.

"Sunday," said Mr Mole, "I beg you won't."

"Won't what ?"

"Won't be quite so familiar with Mrs. Mole. Remember, please, her name is Mrs. Mole."

"Yes, sar ; Chloe Mole."

"Mrs. Mole," said the tutor, severely. "And whether Mhoe Clole—I mean Molly Chole—that is, Chloe Mole or not, little concerns you."

Sunday scratched his wool, and winked again at Monday.

There was evidently something up between them.

"Well, brudder Mole, I will if yer likes ; but, by golly ! won't it sound rum to hear me call my sister Mrs. Mole ?"

Mr. Mole made a very wry face at this speech.

"What do you mean, you ignorant bit of coal, by your sister ?"

"She is my sister, brudder Mole," returned Sunday.

"Don't make a greater ass of yourself than is necessary, Sunday."

"It's a fack," persisted the darkey.

"What is ?"

"Dat Chloe am my sister."

"Bah !"

"Ask her."

"If you try on your unseemly jokes with me, Sunday, I shall certainly complain to Mr. Harvey."

"You can 'plain to Old Nick himself if you like, brudder Mole ; but Chloe Lisbef Jex dat was, Chloe Lisbef Mole dat is, am dis chile's sister."

Sunday leant over the handrail, and appealed to Mrs. Mole.

"Is dat so, Chloe?"

"Course it is, Cæsar Hannibal," replied Mrs. Mole. Sunday turned triumphantly to Mole.

"You hear, sar?"

"Yes, yes," replied the bewildered Mole; "but I don't understand——"

"You don't appear to understand nuffin', brudder Mole," said Sunday, with a faint dash of contempt in his tone. "If Chloe Lisbef Jex and Cæsar Hannibal Augustus Constantine Jex was brudder and sister, ob course you and me is brudder and brudder."

The argument had grown public by this.

As it grew more animated, they spoke in a louder voice, and so that the audience could hear all that was said.

"Bravo, Sunday!" said one of the foremost niggers.

The applause was taken up, and Sunday had to bow gracefully his acknowledgments of their approval.

Mr. Mole winced.

A dreadful feeling was creeping over him.

He felt convinced that he had been done, yet he could not accept the belief all at once.

"My good friend Sunday speaks in a poetical sense," he said, with a bland smile.

"No, I don't," cried Sunday; "I don't know nuffin' about pottery."

"Poetry."

"I says pottery. What I mean, sar, is dat you're my brudder, 'cos Chloe and me had the same mother and same father."

"Ha!"

Mr. Mole was staggered.

There was no resisting this any further.

"The same father and mother!" groaned Mr. Mole. "Why didn't you say so before?"

It was a sad blow to him, for he had reviled Sunday, and heaped all kinds of moral dirt upon that darkey's devoted head before everybody, and now he discovered that he was his brother by marriage.

It was really too bad.

However, this was not all he was to suffer.

The brace of dusky wags had something in store for him.

They had not forgotten or forgiven him for painting them up as he had done.

"He made us white," said Monday to his colleague, "we'll make him black. Dat's de way to take de larf out ob him."

Sunday went on with his introduction of the lecturer.

"My brudder Mole," he said, "am a pusson ob high 'stinction, and don't play second fiddle to no living cuss as a orytor. He've only took to lecturing since he lost his leg. Perhaps you'll say, ladies and gemmen ob colour, dat it's quite natural dat, under de circumstances, he should 'go on de stump.* Dere ain't nuffin' to larf at, you niggers. My brudder Mole, I say, am a pusson ob high distinction. He's got a good deal more in his head dan you can get out. What are you larfing at, you nigger? He ain't got so much wool on his cokernut as some of us?" he went on, as if replying to a remark of one of the audience. "Maybe he ain't, but it's not what he's got on his head, gemmen; it's what he's got in it."

And as Sunday spoke, he thumped the table to emphasise his speech, and in thumping, he jerked Mr. Mole's hat off on to the ground.

Monday picked it up, and as he did so, he tipped the wink to his colleague, and they both grinned.

It almost looked as if there was some mischief in the wind.

Monday made a great show of brushing Mr. Mole's hat inside as well as out.

Now, if you had looked a little closer, it would have appeared as though Monday were rubbing just the inside of the hat, just the rim of the lining which rests upon the forehead, with some powdered burnt cork.

Moreover, he dropped some of the finely-powdered cork into Mr. Mole's coloured silk handkerchief which was in the hat.

This done, he hastened to restore the hat to Mr. Mole.

Sunday had, by this time, finished his address, and

* Need we explain that "Going on the stump" is an Americanism for travelling about lecturing?

made way for Mr. Mole, who stumped forward, and gave a preliminary cough.

The allusion to his growing baldness had not been thrown away.

He did not care to appear to notice it, but by degrees he fiddled at his hat and fidgeted about until he got it on to his head.

"Ahem?" began Mr. Mole. "Ladies and gentlemen——"

"Bravo, brudder Mole!" from Sunday.

"I have much pleasure in meeting you all here to-night, although I must confess that I could wish the cause had been different. We are going away——"

"Oh—h—h," yelled Sunday, suddenly grief-stricken, and the whole of the audience caught it up, howling away at a deafening rate.

"Hush! my good friends," said Mr. Mole, with difficulty making himself heard. "It is not as if I were going to die——"

"Dye what, sar?" asked Monday; "not your whiskers?"

"Dear me?" cried Mole, quite perplexed. "No!"

"What den, sar? Can't be your wool; der ain't 'nuff to dye by no manner ob means."

Mr. Mole sighed.

They seemed to be playing at cross-purposes.

"When I say die, my friends," he said, "I don't mean to paint or change the colour of my hair or beard—far from it. I simply mean dissolution—the word of the same sound, but of a different orthography——"

"Don't know nuffin' 'bout jography," said Sunday.

"In other words," continued Mr. Mole, not heeding the interruption, "I meant, as Shakespeare says, 'the shuffling off this mortal coil——'"

"Dat's me!" cried Sunday, with a laugh. "Oho, Massa Mole says he means shufflin'!"

"Hooray!" yelled the coloured audience.

"Now, you darkies," cried Sunday, "we all know dat Massa Mole is a heavenly dancer."

"He am dat!" cried Monday, "regular beautiful."

"So, gents all, likewise gals," said Sunday, gravely, "what'll you have? Quick step, Lancashire breakdown, or hornpipe? Don't all speak at once."

"Dear me, dear me!" exclaimed Mr. Mole, "I mean——"

"Fandango, bolero, cachuca?" cried Sunday. "Now, den, black folks, choose, for brudder Mole wants to begin."

"De 'Essence ob ole Virginny," cried one of the ladies.

The rest approved of this, for they kicked up a rare row.

Now "The Essence of Old Virginia" was the name of a breakdown which was danced by aged niggers, whose legs had lost their youthful elasticity.

Mr. Mole knew this, and he had a double reason for resisting the suggestion.

Firstly, he did not mean dancing at all.

Secondly, he did not approve of this allusion to the summer of his own life having so completely departed.

"Dear, dear me," he exclaimed, in sheer despair, "if I am not allowed to speak, I shall leave the platform."

He would have carried his threat into effect had not Sunday been there to have stopped him.

Neither he nor Monday meant to let the worthy tutor off so easily.

They managed to obtain silence, and Sunday proceeded to offer some explanation.

"Massa Mole don't mean to dance now," he said; "he've changed his mind."

The audience groaned.

"No, no!" cried Mr. Mole, "that's not it. I never spoke of dancing."

"Oh, yes," corrected Sunday, with a serious and reproachful look, "you said shuffling most distinctual."

"He did, he did!"

"But I didn't mean double shuffling," cried Mr. Mole, in despair.

"Oh—h—h!" ejaculated Sunday. "Massa Mole mean to say dat he's only a ornary shuffler."

Expressions of anger were manifested at this explanation.

Mr. Mole gave it up for a bad job.

He turned to the water-bottle for consolation, and filled a tumbler.

You would never have forgotten the wry face that he made as the water trickled down his throat.

"Sunday!"

"What's the matter, sar?"

"You've forgotten to put the gin in," he said, in a whisper of the greatest disgust.

"Neber mind the gin. Speak to 'em ; dey're getting in a debbil of a temper. Say summat to smooth 'em down like."

"What shall I say ?"

"Tell 'em dat black and white is all one—dat we're all brudders and sisters, and sich ; dem's de sentiments what'll fetch 'em."

"Ladies and gentlemen," said Mr. Mole, "to resume. I came only to deliver a short farewell address to you. I do not like the idea of leaving, even though it be but on a journey, without bidding you good-bye."

"Hear, hear !"

"Thank you. For are you not as dear to me as any white people ? Of course, are we not all men and women with hearts alike—all brothers ?"

"An' some sisters," added Monday, in an audible voice, which made the audience laugh.

"Dat's right, brudder Mole," said Sunday, *sotto voce* ; "you's gwine it. Pile it in stiff."

Mr. Mole could not but see that the pair of darkeys were having some fun with him, and so he made a sly dash at retaliation.

"Black and white are all one to me," he went on to say ; "our good friends here will tell you that I have ever regarded them as my equals. The difference of colour I looked upon as of little consequence. Yet they will tell you I have done my best to make them as white as I am myself."

Sunday and Monday exchanged looks at this.

"They will tell you," said Mr. Mole, encouraged by the laughter and cheers of his auditors ; "that I painted them white to try and demonstrate practically that we were all alike."

"Haw ! haw ! haw !" laughed the coloured people generally.

"An' Massa Mole, findin' dat won't answer," said Monday, suddenly getting on his legs, "is going to paint hisself black ; so, anyhow he'll make hisself our equal."

They cheered at this.

"I can't exactly promise that," said Mr. Mole, super-

ciliously ; " but I may paint them white again on some future occasion."

As he spoke he took off his hat to wipe his forehead, and there, sure enough, was a coronet of black dye.

And then, when he wiped his forehead, he smeared it all over his face.

Three or four dabs of his handkerchief, and he was a regular sweep.

The powdered cork did its work well.

" Ladies an' gemmen," said Sunday, on his legs at once. " Massa Mole promised to paint hisself, which he denies it like ; but don't b'lieve him, he's gwine to do it all de while."

" Haw, haw ! "

" In fack, you might almost say as he's doin' it."

" Haw, haw ! "

And all the while Mr. Mole, smiling and bowing gracefully, and alternately wiping his face with his begrimed handkerchief, was utterly ignorant of any further cause for merriment than his own waggish allusions to the practical joke he had played upon the darkeys.

* * * * *

How the lecture would have ended there is no saying, had not an alarming incident occurred.

A telegram was brought in to Mr. Mole.

It was from New York, and sent by Jack Harkaway the elder.

" To ISAAC MOLE, Bedington Farm.

" From JACK HARKAWAY, Fifth Avenue Hotel, New York.

" My Jack has disappeared. Is he with you ? If not, we fear the worst. Pray return immediately. We are in the deepest distress. My old friend Harvey has also disappeared."

" Read that, Monday," said Mr. Mole seriously, " and then pack up."

" To go ? "

" Yes."

" What's de matter, brudder Mole ? " asked Sunday.

A loud wail from Monday answered his query.

" Oh ! my Jack, my Jack," he cried ; " dem dam

willins hev got him ag'in. Oh ! my poor child, why did dis miserable old nigger come away and leave you? Willin, and traitor, and tief, dat I is."

They were all back again in New York by the first train.

CHAPTER VII.

JACK HARKAWAY SENIOR was at the railway station to meet them as they alighted from the train.

He shook them all eagerly by the hand.

"He's not with you?" he demanded, in a broken voice.

Mr. Mole shook his head.

"Then," said Harkaway, falling upon Monday's shoulders, "the last hope is gone."

And the big-hearted, bold-hearted Harkaway gave himself up to his bitter grief. The last, last hope was gone.

He now feared for his young Jack and his dear friend Harvey's life.

"Forgive my weakness," said Harkaway presently; "I have to keep such a bold front at home, that the effort has overstrained me. If his mother saw me give away, she would die."

"When did he disappear?" asked Mr. Mole.

"Within an hour of your start," was the reply. "He went with Harvey."

"What have you done in the matter?"

"Everything."

"Police?"

"Yes."

"Offered rewards?"

"Yes."

"Do you suspect anybody in particular?"

"Nobody but our old enemies. It must be the work of Hunston and his gang."

"We must all put our heads together," continued Harkaway, "and try what we can think of to recover my Jack and my old friend Harvey. If they're alive, we'll find them."

"We will, for my love is with them both," said Mole.

Mole did what he could to cheer up the poor bereaved father.

But in vain.

He was not to be comforted.

"You must keep up a good face, my friends," Harkaway said, "before my wife and the ladies generally. It is no use alarming them."

"True!"

"Meanwhile, my dear old friend, I think you had better not see Emily or Hilda to-night."

"Why?"

"Because they have been so building upon young Jack and Harvey being with you, that I cannot find it in my heart to undeceive them to-night, at least."

"Very good."

"Take heart," said the faithful Monday, who was ready to blubber. "Take heart, massa; we will find Jack. He is so dear to all ob us."

"If my stumping through New York," said Mr. Mole, "until I have worn my timber toe down to the size of a cotton reel, will do it, I will find our dear Jack."

"Heaven bless you," rejoined the heart-broken Harkaway.

"Cheer up, cheer up," returned poor old Mole, swallowing his tears, and wabbling his nose, for it tingled with grief. "I shall find my boy Jack yet."

"How?"

"That's more than I can say at present."

They little knew the great danger of young Jack, or that Dick Harvey was at that moment stricken down near to death.

* * * * *

Isaac Mole and his Chloe were lodged in the same hotel, but in a remote part of it, in order that Mrs. Harkaway might not run across them.

And Mr. Mole, worn out by his day's journey, fell fast asleep and dreamt that he had found young Jack.

He thought that the boy was shut up in an oven, with Nero the monkey, and that, just as the bakers three, who bore a wonderful resemblance to Hunston, Toro, and Emmerson—were about to heat it, and bake young Jack alive, he came to the rescue.

It so frightened Mr. Mole that he awoke with a start.

Then, as he opened his eyes, he gave a loud cry of alarm.

"Chloe, Chloe, my dear, wake up, wake up."

"What is it?" asked his black wife.

"What's-s-s that on the foot of the bed, my dear?"

"Nothing."

"What!" ejaculated Mole, "do you call that nothing? Do, pray, look."

"I see nothing; you are dreaming, or, perhaps it am your wooden leg I placed at the bottom of de bed."

"Well, if I ever. My dear, do pray wake up and look. It is not my wooden leg. Is it Nero, or is it the old gentleman himself come for you, my dear?"

Chloe looked up rather frightened.

Then she gave shriek one, shriek two, and dived suddenly under the bedclothes.

CHAPTER VIII.

It is now high time that we return to young Jack!

Poor Jack!

So soon after his escape from the woods to be again threatened by a cruel death.

Buried alive!

Bricked up in a chimney by his implacable foes, the three ruffians, Hunston, Toro, and Emmerson.

This surely was the end of all.

Hope seldom dies in the human breast, it has been said, yet it was well-nigh extinct in young Jack's.

The faithful Nero evidently understood that there was danger, for he nestled closer and closer to his master.

"Good Nero, brave Nero," said young Jack, returning his caresses, "you are a true friend. You saved me when near death in the forest tree, and may once more do me a service."

The Monkey whined and whinnied, and nestled closer and closer yet to young Jack.

And as they cuddled up together thus, young Jack caught a glimpse of daylight overhead.

He looked eagerly up.

Yes, there it was, sure enough.

The chimney shaft was nearly straight, so that, small

as was the aperture at the top, it let in a good-sized ray of sunlight.

"If I could only reach that," thought young Jack, "I could escape."

And then hope began to revive.

But it was soon over.

He soon discovered that it was hopeless to attempt such a feat of climbing.

"It is more than Nero could accomplish," said young Jack.

But even as he spoke, he made up his mind to let Nero try it.

He sent him up a little way, and Nero, it was clear, could mount to the top.

And as young Jack watched him, he had a lucky notion.

"Nero, old boy," he said, "come down."

The monkey understood as well as any Christian could have done, and he did more than many Christians do—he obeyed.

"Now, Nero," said young Jack, "I am going to trust you on a very serious mission. I want you to take a letter for me to dad, or to someone at the hotel. Do you hear?"

Nero whined.

He understood, and this was his response.

Young Jack carried a pocket-book, so he took it out, and by dint of a great deal of perseverance and guess work, for it was dark, he contrived to scribble the following note to his father—

"To MR. JOHN HARKAWAY,

"Fifth Avenue Hotel.

"With my earnest prayers to anybody finding this note to forward it immediatly to him.

"MY OWN DEAR FATHER,—I am in the toils. Hunston and his villanous companions have caught me and caged me. I fear Mr. Harvey is killed. I am in the empty house from whence Mr. Jefferson once rescued me, buried alive, bricked up in the chimney on the first floor. May Heaven preserve my life until you come and rescue me.

"Your unhappy boy,
"JACK."

The next thing was to secure this note about Nero's body.

x He carried a ^s small pincushion—the gift of little Emily—in his waistcoat pocket, and this being amply furnished, it came in just handily.

He pinned the letter to Nero's Jacket and then, with many a pat of encouragement, he started him up the chimney again.

And as Nero climbed, something fell from his pocket, and clattered upon the ground by young Jack's feet.

It was a knife.

A long, slender-bladed knife Mr. Nero had spied in the pocket of the villain Hunston, and boned.

And now it was likely to prove of service to Jack.

He picked it up, and then watched Nero's progress in breathless interest.

It was not easy climbing.

But Nero was equal to the task, and he went up at a great rate.

Once at the top, he squeezed through, and then, squatting beside the chimney pot, he leant over and rammed his head in again to take a farewell look at his young master.

It quite shut out that little ray of light for the moment.

"I'm glad that there is that much light," said young Jack to himself; "it would look horribly like the grave if that little bit of light were shut out."

Poor boy! he little knew what was in store for him.

And this little light, poor as it was, was soon to be denied him.

While Nero was there, grinning at his young master, he was alarmed by a noise close behind him.

The poor, faithful monkey could not understand what was said.

But the voices were those of enemies, and so Nero made off.

Gliding along the parapet, he dodged down behind a stack of chimneys.

And just as he had taken up his position to watch what was going on, the three men crept over the roof, and made their way to the chimney from which Nero had just emerged.

"This is the chimney."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes."

"To work, then."

"Where's the mortar?"

"Here it is."

Emmerson watched without rendering any assistance, and as the work proceeded, he criticised its utility.

"The boy is safe enough where he is," said Emmerson.

"We know that."

"Then why waste your time in blocking up the chimney top?"

"He might live."

"Well?"

"And we don't exactly want that."

"But you don't want him to die at once."

"No."

"What then?"

"He must be made sure. We were tricked out of our revenge in the wood."

"There's not much danger this time of his being discovered," said Emmerson; "but you seem anxious not to cause him unnecessary pain."

"We!"

"Yes; if it is a question of humanity," said Emmerson, with a sneer, "all well and good."

"What do you mean?" growled Hunston.

"Simply this," returned Emmerson, "that by closing the chimney in, you will make an end of it too quickly. I should have liked the brat to die slowly; for him and that cursed monkey to have gnawed at each other and fought when the pangs of hunger were on them hard, and to have dragged on a miserable end. That's what I call vengeance."

"It is—it is!" cried Toro.

"These Harkaways have as many lives as a cat," Hunston went on to say; "and if we left him half a loop-hole, he might escape us yet."

"He might," admitted Toro.

"I can't see how, for one," said Emmerson.

"No matter; let us make sure. 'Safe bind,' you know."

"All right."

And as they talked, they set to work with tiles and mortar to end their fatal business.

Young Jack saw his daylight gone, and his heart sank. He did not understand it at first.

His idea was that Nero had returned, and was lolling over the chimney-pot so thoroughly as to block out the light.

But he could not deceive himself so for long.

The daylight was unmistakably gone and with it all hope. Alas, poor Jack !

There was no hope.

None.

"I wonder how Nero will get on," thought young Jack to himself. "I wonder if he will find his way to dad or to Mr. Mole, or to anyone who can help me."

"Let me think," he said to himself again and again. "What is to be done?"

"The wall is newly built," he thought to himself, "and so it can't be very strong."

He pushed against it with desperation, but he might as well have tried to move the Pyramids.

Then he tried to bring the knife which Nero had let fall into use.

He dug and picked at the mortar with great perseverance, until by dint of much hard work, he contrived to insert the point of the knife into the mortar between the bricks.

He pushed on and on at this until he fell asleep over his task, and forgot, for the time at least, all his troubles, and forgot even that he had been entombed alive.

CHAPTER IX.

YOUNG JACK woke up with a feeling of stiffness in every joint, and an alarming hunger upon him.

He was not aware for a moment of what had taken place, but he soon discovered this in stretching out his hands, for he grazed his knuckles against the walls of his narrow prison.

This was a forcible reminder.

By degrees it all came back to him.

He remembered all that had occurred ; poor Dick Harvey stricken down, the brutal usage, his violent abduction, and finally being buried alive in that horrible place.

How long he had slept he had no idea, for it was pitch dark when he fell asleep, and it was equally dark now.

Not a ray of light, any more than one of hope ! Poor young Jack !

He little thought that he had slept for fifteen hours at a stretch.

The stillness and darkness of his cell had lulled him off.

It was night when he dropped off to sleep ; it was night now.

Always night !

"I wish I had slept a few hours more," he said to himself, "instead of waking so soon.

"I could then have forgotten all my troubles.

"I can't help myself at all ; as it is, it is no use trying.

"They'll never think of looking for me here.

"I wish I could go to sleep and die."

And then he felt very much inclined to weep.

But when he found the tears rising to his eyes, he felt ashamed of himself.

So he drove them resolutely back, and resolved, come what might, to die like a brave boy.

What was he doing when he dropped off ?

He remembered now that he was trying to pierce the wall.

He thought awhile, and then by degrees he recollected, too, that he was meeting with some slight encouragement when sleep had conquered him.

"Where is Nero's knife, though ?" was his next question.

He groped along the wall until he came across the handle, sticking in just where he had left it.

Then young Jack fell on his knees, and offered up a prayer for help.

Poor boy, he needed help in that dark cell.

Alone and shut out from the world.

Springing to his feet, once more he set to work.

"I'm precious hungry," he said to himself.

His trouble assumed a new shape.

He would die of starvation beyond all doubt.

He set to work with redoubled vigour to pick away the mortar at the hole in the wall, until it suddenly yielded to his pressure.

He drew back his instrument, and then, by all that was lucky ! there was daylight through. This was glorious.

It gave young Jack heart and hope.

He forgot hunger, fatigue, despair, and sucked greedily at the draught of comparatively fresh air which the aperture admitted.

It was at first meat and drink for him.

But such sustenance could only suffice for a short time.

After awhile the old pangs of hunger returned.

He was going to starve !

Of this he was sure.

Still he meant to die hard.

He had heard of sailors wrecked without food or water, and he remembered how they began by "taking in a reef," in other words, by tightening their waist belts.

He profited by this reminiscence.

But still nature would not be denied.

"I shall die soon," he said to himself, "and what will they say of me ? Will dad say that I was a thoughtless young monkey, and disobedient ?

"Ah, no ; poor, dear dad ! he will forget my bad conduct and talk only of my good qualities, I know that well enough. And ma, and little Emily, what will she say ?

"She won't think much of me.

"She'll throw my gift away, and as for hers——"

He stopped short.

What of hers ?

What had he done with it ?

She had given him a box of chocolates, you will remember.

He had it still with him.

He fished out the box from his pocket.

But a box of chocolates is only a small stay for a growing boy.

After the contents of the box were all devoured, the pangs returned, and although he fought hard against them, they were too much for him.

Slowly, yet surely, he drooped, drooped, and sank, and presently he was powerless to help himself.

Three days and three nights passed in this way.

On the fourth day poor young Jack was as near death as ever living soul was yet.

For twelve hours he had done nothing in the way of struggling out of his imprisonment.

His strength was gone.

A faint, sickly feeling was creeping over him.

A chilly sensation was stealing over his young heart, and a nameless dread was upon him. This was surely death.

"Mother!" he cried, sinking upon the ground helplessly; "dear, dear mammal—dear father!—Emily, dear! Oh! how dreadful to die so young, like poor Harry Girdwood."

And then, with broken phrases of prayer upon his lips, poor young Jack sank senseless.

CHAPTER X.

MRS. MOLE dived under the bedclothes, but Mr. Mole was too frightened himself to allow his domestic partner to hide away, while he was alone to face the danger, if there was really any danger to face.

"Chloe," cried Mr. Mole, still wagging his one leg out of bed in a threatening manner at the supposed dreadful object at the foot of the bedstead. "Chloe!"

"Ugh!" grunted his partner from under the sheets.

"Come out."

"Nebber!" replied his spouse.

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Mole, severely. "What is there to be afraid of?"

"Nuffin'."

"Just my sentiments. Then why don't you come out?"

"I won't—I won't; de ugly ting come for you, not me."

"It's ridiculous, Chloe," said Mr. Mole, his teeth chattering with fright.

"Come out, do," continued Mr. Mole, imperatively.

And then he tried to rout her out.

But to judge from his manœuvres, in trying to get under the bedclothes, he was more full of shielding himself from

danger than of convincing Mrs. Mole that there was nothing to fear.

In fact, not to disguise the facts of the case, he got as far under the bedclothes as he could ; and when, after a good twenty minutes, his head emerged therefrom and looked about, that dreadful vision had disappeared from the foot of the bed.

"Gone !"

Well might he be astonished, for it was indeed amazing.

How that weird and spectral-looking visitor had contrived to disappear so effectually it would be difficult to say.

Mr. Mole, however, accounted for it to himself.

"Gone ! Oh, I see," he muttered ; "it was all my fancy. But it's really very extraordinary what lengths one's fancy will carry one."

And he crouched down in the bed closer to Mrs. Mole, and covered up his head too.

A precious old humbug was Isaac Mole.

One of the worst of humbugs, for he tried to humbug himself.

He lay trembling from head to foot, so that his wooden leg, lying at the bottom of the bed, rattled against the end of the bedstead, while he heard someone very distinctly moving about the room.

And yet he pretended to be asleep when Mrs. Mole popped her black head out and called his attention to the alarming sounds.

"Mr. Mole," said his fair spouse ; "Isaac !"

Never a word from Mole.

He was too artful to answer, for he guessed what was wanted.

He would be expected to get up and do the manly thing—to rout out the intruder.

"That's all very well," said Isaac Mole to himself, when it occurred to him in this light, "but I might not be able to carry it off with that dash that one is accustomed to associate with the heroes of romance. I might, in fact, be the routed out, instead of the router."

"Isaac !" whispered his wife from under the clothes, nudging him again.

He could keep silent no longer, as she now began to pinch, and if there was one thing more than another that worried Mr. Mole, it was a pinch from Mrs. Mole.

So he grunted—

“Eh, dear? What now?”

“Hush! Get up; there’s the ole gemman hisself here,” said Mrs. Mole. “Me tink him must want you.”

But Mr. Mole was not to be roused.

Mrs. Mole, however, was possessed of the great virtue of perseverance, and she pegged away at her spouse until he could no longer affect not to hear.

At length he sat up in bed keeping close to Mrs. Mole, and they both looked about them. Nothing was to be seen.

The cause of all their alarm had vanished.

The new-married couple looked at each other sheepishly.

“Well, dear?” said the artful male Mole.

“Well, dear,” responded the female Mole, “there’s nuffin’.”

“Of course not.”

“Well?”

“Well, my dear?”

“What’s all this noise for, dear?”

Humbug again, that you are, Isaac Mole, and possessed of what an elastic mind to be so easily made up to any thing you may wish.

He had just before been in an alarming state of mind on account of that fearsome sight which both he and his wife had witnessed, and now he chose to look upon it as a mental hallucination, because he did not wish to be made uncomfortable.

“Of course it was nothing,” he said. “It was all my fancy.”

“What was?”

“What? Why, that.”

“Yes, Isaac,” returned his better half; “but it wasn’t mine.”

“Nonsense, my dear; your fancy was biassed by my own—that’s all.”

Mrs. Mole scratched her nightcap.

“That means you persuaded me to think the same as you did?”

“Well, yes,” replied Mr. Mole, involuntarily.

“Then that couldn’t be by no means.”

“Why?”

"Because I didn't know what you thought. You neber tole me, Isaac, and I see a ghost as plain as possible, so get out and look, and when you got him tight, tell dis child."

"What was it like?" asked her husband, wishing to gain the necessary time to screw up his courage to the sticking place.

"Half like de old one, and half like a monkey."

She was mistaken in this.

The ghostly visitor was good deal more like a monkey.

At length Mrs. Mole, growing impatient, and partly reassured herself, slid from the bed, with her eyes fixed upon the late perch of that grim visitor.

Isaac Mole could no longer hang back.

He stumped down on to the floor on the other side of the bed.

And then the search began.

They looked everywhere—high and low—but no trace of any thing or anybody could be seen.

At length Mrs. Mole appeared to be on the scent.

"Hush!" she cried, holding up her finger warningly.

"What?"

"A noise in the chimney," responded Mrs. Mole.

Mr. Mole listened, and surely enough there came sounds of an inexplicable character from that direction.

So, with an effort of courage, he advanced to make a reconnoissance, when just as he got his head well forward, there was a scramble in the flue, and down came a regular cloud of soot.

"A-chew!" cried Mr. Mole, suddenly converted into a "man an' a brudder" much more promptly than by Sunday's system at the memorable lecture.

"A-chew!" sneezed his spouse.

And they kept up this peculiar duet for several minutes.

After awhile, the titillation of their olfactories ceased, and the cloud of soot cleared off.

So they drew carefully nearer to the chimney again, and then Mrs. Mole gave a loud cry of alarm.

"What is it, my dear?" asked her husband, hanging back.

"Look up."

Mr. Mole advanced very carefully this time, and he

was just soon enough to catch a glimpse of a long, hirsute tail flick along and disappear.

"Good Heaven!"

"Oh, mercy!"

And there they stood, trembling and staring at each other like two half daft people, suddenly stricken with palsy.

* * * * *

Meanwhile, Nero careered gaily up the chimney again.

He had taken alarm at the aspect of Mrs. Mole in her nightcap, and so he returned by the way he had come—up the chimney.

This was the explanation of the whole of the ghost mystery.

Up the chimney and over the roof went Nero, only pausing for the luxury of an occasional flea.

When he had got along some little distance, he began to look about him for a new chimney.

He had no great liking for the roofs, and he had been travelling along from house to house so far that he began to have quite enough of it.

The corner chimney of the next stack took his fancy, so he dropped over, put in his tail carefully, and then followed with his legs.

Facilus descensus flue.

He found it easy going for awhile, but presently the atmosphere of the chimney appeared to change and get warmer with very remarkable suddenness.

At first it was more agreeable than otherwise.

But by degrees it grew to be too warm to be pleasant.

Then a faint smell of smoke arose, and in the course of a few minutes it grew so dense that Nero was well-nigh choked.

He squeaked, and sputtered and squealed, and then up he went again.

But before he got to the top, it so far overcame him that he grew suddenly dizzy.

The consequence might be anticipated.

Up there went such a volume of smoke that it choked the unlucky monkey, and down he came with a run.

He scattered the fire, and frightened them all half out of their wits.

The occupants of the room started back into the dif-

ferent corners of the room as Nero, like an animated ball of soot, rolled into the room.

Nero jumped up and squeaked, and then shook the soot from his face.

Those present, however, appeared to recognise him.

"Nero!"

A general chorus of astonishment ensued.

"Nero!" said everybody in a breath.

Nero, having shaken his vision clear, surveyed the company.

"It is my Jack's monkey," ejaculated the voice of Harkaway.

Nero grinned.

He knew him well enough.

The room into which Nero had so unceremoniously introduced himself was the sitting-room of Mrs. Harkaway, young Jack's mother.

The calamity which had just befallen the family had fairly prostrated her, and their medical adviser had ordered her to keep her room.

But that her spirits might not be allowed to droop, she was to keep as much company as possible.

And so there chanced to be there present, Emily and Jack Harkaway the elder, Mrs. Harvey, and Ada.

"Poor Nero!" said Jack Harkaway, having recovered from his first surprise. "Nero, where is your young master and our old friend Harvey?"

"Ah, he can tell us," said Emily, with eagerness.

Could he?

Alas! we believe that they would have given half their fortune—aye, the whole of it if they could have invested Nero then with the gift of speech.

"Nero," said Jack, "come here, my intelligent friend, and let us know what has become of my boy."

Nero sat upright before them, surveying the company and grinning.

"Perhaps he's hungry," suggested Mrs. Harkaway.

He was too.

You would not long have remained in doubt upon that subject had you seen him dispose of some bread and a few apples.

While Nero was enjoying his meal, Mr. Magee Brand, the dwarf, was announced.

"Show him in at once," said Harkaway.

The little gentleman entered with a downcast face that reflected its sadness and disappointment in Harkaway's.

"What luck?" demanded Harkaway.

The dwarf shook his head.

"None, so far."

"And Mr. Jefferson; where is he at present?"

"Outside."

The fact was that Mr. Jefferson had so signally failed in his hunt after young Jack that his hope was gone.

His spirits drooped in consequence.

"Our latest idea was to return to the empty house, where they once forced our dear boy," said the little gentleman.

"Why there?" asked Harkaway. "It was scarcely a likely place."

"So say I."

"Then why try it?"

"Because Jefferson has his own obstinate views upon the matter. Because he's as difficult to move as a mule. There's no doing any thing with him if once he gets a fancy into his head."

"What does he say?"

"He is convinced that Jack is spirited away there somewhere?"

"Where?"

"In the house."

"Impossible!"

"So say I."

"But upon what does he base his fancy?"

"He says that he is sure that they have some hiding-place there—that when he came up so well in the nick of time before, they were about to stow Jack away; but, if you remember, the villains suddenly made their escape."

"But where?"

"Precisely," said Mr. Brand; "that's what I say to Jefferson."

"Well, but you have been there?"

"Yes."

"And found nothing?"

"Nothing."

"Then his obstinacy is cured at last."

Mr. Magog Brand shook his head and laughed sadly.

"Not at all. That's the curious part of it. He is just as positive as ever that young Jack is stowed away there."

"It is impossible!"

"So I think," answered the dwarf, pensively. "Yet Jefferson is cautious and bold. It seems the result of some strange instinct—some strange inspiration, more than anything else. Why, he spent half an hour if he spent a minute in the room where he rescued young Jack before."

"The same room?"

"The very same. Yet it is not a place containing holes and nooks. You can take it all in at a glance. I have told him that it is impossible that any thing can have occurred there, for it is no longer the deserted house it was. The builders are at work there. *In the very room he hovers about so they have been completing some of the brickwork!*"

And the brave Jefferson had, in his search for young Jack, been so close to him that his hands had wandered a dozen times over the newly-placed bricks, behind which young Jack Harkaway was slowly, yet surely, dying of hunger and suffocation!

"What noise is that?" asked Harkaway, looking towards the door.

The next moment the door was burst rudely open, and Mr. Jefferson strode in, dragging Mr. Mole with him.

"A letter from Jack!" cried the big American, wildly; "look—a letter from Jack!"

The ladies shrieked

Emily turned faint, and Harkaway grew as pale as death.

"A letter from Jack—my Jack?"

"Yes."

"Jefferson," said little Mr. Brand, "are you mad?"

"Mad?—no. Here is the letter, and our good friend Mr. Mole has brought it."

"Mr. Mole!" cried Emily.

"Yes, my dear lady."

"Is this true?"

"It is."

"Oh, Mr. Mole!" exclaimed young Jack's mother, "I thought my boy was with you. But it is at any rate a consolation to find you have some news."

"News!" iterated Mole, who was apparently more than half stupefied by it himself. "I have a letter."

"Where's the letter? Pray give it to me," said Emily, with eagerness.

"Here!"

"Oh, give it to me—quick!"

She took it, scanned it through, and then she sank back, as though overcome by what she had read.

Harkaway took the letter and read it down twice.

He was amazed.

It is needless to say that this was the letter which poor young Jack had written under difficulties, after being bricked up in the chimney of the empty house.

"Whom did this come from?" exclaimed Harkaway, excitedly.

"Who brought it?"

"Yes, yes," echoed everybody present; "who brought the letter?"

"Why, don't you answer, sir?" said Jefferson to the tutor, in a tone of remonstrance.

"I brought it," answered Mr. Mole, "and it was brought to me by a ghost!"

"A ghost!"

"A what!"

"Nonsense.

"An evil ghost," persisted Mr. Mole. "We took it for the devil himself because of his tail, which we caught sight of as he flew up the chimney."

But Harkaway began to see the real state of the case, and his views were confirmed by Jefferson, who cried, suddenly—

"I see it all!"

"You do, you do!" ejaculated Emily. "What is it? Oh, pray explain, Mr. Jefferson!"

"I will, willingly. Nero brought this letter. It wants no magician to tell that; it says so in the letter itself."

"It does!"

"True."

"Go on."

"Gently," said Mr. Jefferson; "and it confirms my views—my obstinate opinion, as my friend Magog calls it."

"Then you think——"

"That young Jack is in the house where I found him before, and where I am going to find him again."

"Hurrah! hurrah!"

And before they could utter another word, Jefferson had dashed out of the room.

CHAPTER XI.

THE bold Jefferson was a man of action—not of words. He set to work.

Firstly, he set two or three persons at once to fetch picks and spades.

At the same time he had a cab brought to convey the party to the scene of action.

The object of this was to avoid creating any unnecessary sensation.

In less than twenty minutes they were upon the scene.

He led the way quickly upstairs to the room where the unhappy victim was bricked up, and there Jefferson, after a brief glance round the room, pointed to the fresh brick-work.

"Set to work there; lose not a moment," he said to his assistants.

They obeyed readily.

"Ply your pick and spade quicker.

"Any fool might have guessed as much," said he, half to himself; "and so should I if I hadn't let myself be half persuaded from it by that Magog, idiot that I was. Poor boy—poor boy! I much fear he is dead."

It was not a long job for them.

In less than one-sixth of the time that it had taken the villanous accomplices to build up that hideous tomb, they had dragged it down.

And when they had got it sufficiently demolished to secure a firm hold, they made a desperate tug at it.

But it held firm.

"Stand away," said Mr. Jefferson; "let me try."

Then, with one mighty tug, down came the brickwork, and there a heart-breaking spectacle stood before them.

The unhappy young Jack was livid.

Death was fastening on him rapidly.

Hunger was within an ace of completing the work.
As the wall gave way, he gave a faint, hollow groan.
The pallor of death was upon him.

His eyes were lusterless.

His lips wore the hue of the grave.

Probably a few minutes more would have settled it.

Suddenly a cry arose from the end of the room.

A wail of heartfelt anguish.

"My boy, my boy! Oh, my poor darling Jack!"

It was Harkaway.

The grief-stricken father would have burst his way through them, but Jefferson held him back with a gentle, yet resolute hand.

"Quietly, Harkaway, quietly," he said, in a low voice.
"Consider the dreadful state your poor boy is in."

"Let me take him in my arms, Jefferson."

"Keep back!"

"Unhand me, I say, Jefferson," said Harkaway, growing indignant in his impatience. "Would you insult me?"

"No, Harkaway; you know that well."

"Then I say——"

"Patience! I will not let you or any man kill our poor boy by folly or imprudence until all that can be done has been tried to save him."

"Kill him?"

"Yes."

"What mean you?"

"Can't you see?"

"No."

"Then wait till the doctor comes."

He had been sent for, and just then he put in an appearance.

"Good Heaven!" exclaimed the man of skill, startled out of his accustomed calmness by such an unwonted spectacle. "Who can have done this?"

"Fiends—devils!" answered Jack's father, wringing his hands. "Oh, would that I had them in my clutch now!"

"Calm yourself," said the doctor, reprovingly. "There is life here, and that is all. It hangs upon a thread."

"Is he in great danger?" asked Harkaway, eagerly.

The doctor nodded.

"I will not answer for the consequences," he replied, gravely, "if he is rudely disturbed. True affection is shown more in the restraint which one puts upon one's feelings than in noisy demonstrations. The least shock may kill him."

"Trust me, then."

"Hush!"

The doctor took a small bottle from his pocket, and unscrewed the stopper with mathematical precision, as he said in a whisper—

"See, he has fainted. He may go off in that state."

Who shall describe the torture that poor Harkaway suffered, upon hearing this fatal opinion given in such a way?

To be restored to his brave boy, only to know that the slightest accident, any moment, might snatch him away again, was indeed agonising.

Hunston had indeed part of his long-sought revenge on Harkaway at that moment.

They had to wait and watch.

The doctor placed a phial to the poor boy's nostrils, and held it there with considerable patience for a time.

Presently there was a slight twitching of the face, and the doctor looked up at Harkaway.

There were evident signs of satisfaction in the doctor's face.

"He lives yet," he whispered to Harkaway.

The nostrils of the patient dilated faintly—then came a gentle sigh.

The doctor took the phial from his nostrils, and applied it to his mouth.

A single drop of this sent a thrill through the suffering boy's frame from head to foot.

He opened his eyes.

Harkaway was about to rush forward again, when the doctor restrained him with a warning glance.

Jack looked about him in a half-dazed manner.

"Here, my boy," said the doctor, "taste this."

Some weak brandy and water had been brought, and young Jack sipped at this, and at each sip his strength recovered.

His expression grew less vacant by degrees, and his eyes glistened.

His senses were returning rapidly.

The first face his eyes rested upon was his father's, and with a smile of recognition, he murmured—

“Father!”

It was half playfully done, half sadly.

Then, looking up again, he cried—

“Dad!”

“My boy!—my boy!” faltered poor Harkaway.

“Are you cross with me still? You—it wasn't my fault—I fought hard. They were three against me, after striking down poor Harvey.”

He sank back.

The effort was too much for him, and it took the doctor some few minutes to bring him round again.

“Tell dad not to be cross,” said young Jack.

“I won't tell him anything,” said the doctor, with an assumption of sternness he was very far from feeling, “unless you promise to be very calm and quiet.”

“I will—I will.”

“Then I daresay Mr. Harkaway will forgive you, though damme if I know for what,” he added, under his breath.

The next moment Harkaway was kneeling on the ground beside his boy, and there father and son, once more united, mingled their tears.

CHAPTER XII.

It was some time before they could venture to move the unfortunate boy.

But when once they could get him back home, his return to health was not a very long job.

Now, it was about a fortnight after the events just narrated that one evening, just towards dusk, the Harkaway family were all assembled, talking over the strange fate and absence of Dick Harvey.

“Poor Harvey,” said Harkaway, in reply to Emily.

At this moment three visitors were announced.

They proved to be Mr. Nabley and his brother detec-

tive, Daniel Pike, in company with young Harry Girdwood.

"You mentioned Mr. Harvey," said Pike. "I have news of him."

"Tell us quickly then," said Jack, for Hilda had retired a few minutes before.

"It took me a great deal of trouble to find him, but at length I managed to discover the chamber where he was lying apparently at death's door.

"I had him moved; a first-rate physician has restored him, and here he is."

At the word Dick rushed into the room and greeted his old friends.

"But where is Hilda?" he asked, looking round.

"Not far off," said Emily.

In a few minutes more all were happily reunited, and the detectives retired with a handsome reward, taking young Girdwood with them.

The latter was the inseparable companion of the two English detectives now.

He devoted himself to hunting down the murderers of his beloved brother Oliver.

His whole life was devoted to it.

Now it fell out that soon after that alarming encounter in the woods which young Jack and his monkey had with Hunston and Toro, Harry Girdwood went to the scene of the strife one night to take observations.

His object was clear.

The Bowery gang had mysteriously fled.

Disappeared.

But where?

He held a very decided opinion that the Bowery gang intended sailing away with Captain Clemmans.

The time for their departure was not yet up.

Meanwhile, they had some hiding-place.

Harry Girdwood hovered about the wood night and morning.

And at length his perseverance was rewarded.

He came upon three of the party unexpectedly.

Hunston was one.

Toro was another.

The third man he had some difficulty in recognising at first.

It was Protean Bob.

It was here that these desperadoes lurked and skulked away.

Harry Girdwood crept into the thick brushwood close to their very feet.

It was a dangerous game to play.

But he thought of his poor murdered brother, and nerved himself up for the task.

"Have you got any news, Emmerson?" asked Hunston.

"When shall we go, then?"

"That you can know to-morrow if you like."

"What hour?"

"I cannot say, but early."

"Will you bring us the news?" demanded Toro.

"No, I have to be elsewhere, and I want one of you to go on a message for Clemmans, down Broadway. I think you had better do that."

"I?" said Hunston.

"Yes."

"Why?"

"Toro's big body is a sort of landmark, and is likely to betray both himself and us."

"True."

"Very good," said Toro; "then I'll be here."

"Clemmans's messenger will whistle as he crosses the water."

"Very good; I will answer."

And after this they separated.

Then, when the coast was clear, Harry Girdwood crept out of his hiding place, and hurried off to Fifth Avenue, where he sought first Nabley and Daniel Pike the detectives.

To them he confided all that he had heard.

And then a grand expedition was organized.

The two detectives and Harry Girdwood went off to lay Hunston by the heels.

Harkaway, Harvey, Jefferson, Magog Brand, the two darkeys and young Jack went after Toro.

"To which party shall I attach myself?" asked Mr. Mole.

"Why, sir?" said young Jack.

"Why, because I must do my share," replied the tutor, pompously.

"In what respect, sir?" demanded his pupil.

"It is likely to inspire the enemy with a wholesome fear, in fact, great dread, when he hears my name."

Young Jack stuffed his handkerchief into his mouth to stifle his laughter.

"Yes, Jack, my boy, I shall first bid farewell to Mrs. Mole; for as I shall tackle this giant brigand single-handed, I think it better to say farewell to my dear wife, in case I should not return alive."

"Oh, Mr. Mole!" cried Jack, "no fear. You'll return to Mrs. Mole all alive, all alive, oh!"

Mr. Mole made up his mind to go.

And go he did.

"You know, Jack," said he to his pupil, "these scenes of activity are my proper sphere."

"Indeed, sir."

"Yes, I never shine to such advantage as when in a scrimmage of some kind."

"I should not have believed it, sir," responded young Jack, comically, "unless you had told me yourself."

Mr. Mole was cross.

"And why not? Do you then take me for a coward?"

"Good gracious, no."

"I should hope not," said Mr. Mole, with dignity.

"In my earlier days, I earned some not unmerited distinction, at least, so the world has been good enough to say, by my address in action. Many's the man I have laid low with this powerful arm, Jack, my boy."

"Indeed, sir."

"One's reputation is sure to cling to one. I shall go; in all probability I may be of very signal service, and perhaps be the means of saving all your lives."

"I am glad, sir, you will go."

"Yes, my dear boy," replied the great Mole; "fear not, for in the hour of danger my courage and power shall make Toro the giant tremble."

And the noble Mole departed, leaving young Jack to explain to his father Mr. Mole's intention of fighting the brigand single-handed.

They started before daybreak, and crossed the water as quietly as possible.

They had not long to wait.

Toro was eager to learn the news, and got to the appointed spot before the time.

Just as he arrived, he heard a whistle from the water.

"They're here," said the Italian, half aloud.

Toro took a whistle from his pocket, and blew the answering call.

It echoed shrilly in the forest for awhile.

Then something whizzed through the air.

Before he could utter a word, a rope flew over his head, and as it dropped to his elbows, it tightened.

There was a jerk, and down he was dragged by the lasso, which had been so dexterously thrown over him by Magog Brand.

A moment more, and the murderer and brigand was surrounded by the whole of the Harkaway party.

CHAPTER XIII.

CAUGHT.

CAGED at last.

The brigand struggled and wrestled like a second Samson.

But it would have taken something more than the strength of even that hero to have broken his bonds.

The assembled enemies of the brigands formed a formidable muster.

On every hand stood a foe.

Here was Sunday, holding a hatchet ready to bury its ugly blade in the prisoner's head should he contrive, in his desperate struggles, to set himself free.

Beside Sunday stood young Jack, covering the writhing giant with a pistol.

Next to young Jack stood our old friend Isaac Mole, armed with a pistol in each hand, two pistols in a belt round his waist, and a long sword by his side.

But Mr. Mole was evidently in doubt about his own address in the handling of firearms, for he held them at arm's length and averted his gaze.

Had they chanced to explode, it is probable that he would have done more damage to his own party than to the prisoner.

Next to Mr. Mole stood Dick Harvey, still pale and weak from Toro's attack, and Jack Harkaway.

And, although Toro saw all this, he struggled on.

Had he been unfortunate enough to wriggle himself free from his cords, he would have been done to death before he could have stirred from the spot.

But luckily for him, he could not.

Little Magog Brand came up just then with Monday.

"Now, friends all," he said, with so cheerful an air that no one could have anticipated the proposition which he was about to make; "shall we get the noose ready?"

Toro heard.

This was evident enough, for the words sank deeply into his soul.

They meant to hang him.

He felt sure that his fate was sealed when once he was trapped, yet the thoughts of death by strangulation were dreadful to him.

The Italian ruffian was, of course, no coward.

No, he was brave enough in his way.

Yet his courage was of that peculiar cast which would lead him to face death in action—meet the most formidable foes you could find him—aye, even at the cannon's mouth, but he could not meet his fate coolly as a Briton or a Yankee would.

He turned livid.

"Shall we hang de tief," asked Monday, "or shall we tie him up and roast him fust? De big beast roast well."

There spoke the savage.

Long intercourse with the Harkaways had smoothed it down, you see, but could not entirely eradicate the natural instincts of the ex-Prince of Limbi.

"Let's tie um up and whip um a bit?" suggested Sunday.

"No."

"Only a little bit, Massa Harkaway," pleaded the darkey.

But Harkaway would not hear of it.

"We are not wild Indians, nor are we savages," said he. "He has earned his death and die he must, but we are civilised people, and cannot put a fellow-creature to death by torture."

The silence of the surrounders showed clearly enough that they entirely agreed with this sentiment.

"What shall we do with him?" said Harvey.

"Burn him like a ole 'possum up a gum tree," suggested Sunday.

"Tie him up by his toes to a tree," added Monday. "De big villain tie Massa Jack up, and put bullet in dis child's ribs."

"Let us hang him," persisted Magog Brand. "And do it at once to get the vermin out of our sight."

Toro scowled at the speaker.

He could have almost met his fate with resignation, if he could but have annihilated the dwarf first.

"True," said Harkaway. "Mr. Brand is right; but should we not give him up to justice?"

"Justice is here. Shall he hang?"

"Remember, Massa Harkaway," said Monday, "de big brute nearly kill Massa Jack twice, and perhaps him do it quite third time."

"Well," said Harkaway; "he has lived like a cur, he has warred against boys and women, and no enemy has been too small for him. Let him hang like a rabid cur; he deserves his fate."

Toro writhed.

Every vein in his huge carcase swelled with his mighty struggles to free himself from bondage.

His face and forehead grew purple, until it was hideous to look upon him, for you would have expected each moment to see the blood start from his eyes or nostrils.

This was torture.

His more civilised captors did not understand torture according to the Limbian programme, nor as the darkey's African brother would suggest.

But they tortured him far worse than any physical agony could possibly have done.

The scathing contempt they showed for him ate into his very soul.

You have often seen how he writhed under the biting tongue of his fellow ruffian Hunston.

How much more, then, must he have suffered now?

Now, curious to relate, amidst all this bitter hatred shown to the captive giant, the one person who felt inclined to relent was the one who had been the greatest sufferer from his violence.

Young Jack.

He was not squeamish.

He did not fear the sight of blood, but he could not endure to contemplate such utter helplessness.

He would not have cared had Toro fallen in fight.

But there was a grim solemnity about the condemning a fellow-creature to death in cold blood, which horrified the boy.

"We are all agreed?" demanded the dwarf.

"Yes."

Every voice responded with the fatal monosyllable "Yes."

That "Yes" sounded in Toro's ears like a death-knell.

The miserable man fought hard with his feelings.

He shuddered in spite of himself.

Now came the fatal order—

"Get ready the rope."

The heart of the man mountain, this mammoth tyrant, sank down to his very heels.

He bit his tongue and clenched his teeth to prevent their chattering.

"Hyar's de rope, massa," said Sunday; "I's made a 'ev'ingly noose; me show it him."

"Yes, let him see it," cried Monday; "it am better rope and stronger dan him use for poor Massa Jack in de woods."

Toro shut his eyes.

At any rate, he would not look at this hideous thing which was to choke the breath of life out of him.

So he thought. So he resolved.

But think you he could keep to this purpose?

No, struggle as he would, it had a fatal fascination for him, and he was forced to open his eyes to look upon the cool, deliberate preparations being made for his own execution.

"Let me see the rope," said Harkaway.

"Here, sar."

He took the rope and tried the noose against his knee as hard as he could.

And as he tugged, the fear-stricken wretch upon the ground drew mental agonising pictures of the rope about his own throat, and thought how he should look as his face was convulsed with the death-agony.

But Harkaway never thought of this.

His sole purpose was to see that the noose was properly made, and that the doomed man should not suffer any unnecessary pain.

It slipped a little way and then it stopped.

"Sunday."

"Yes, sar."

"Come here."

"Yes, sar."

The negro approached, hanging his head.

"This will not do, Sunday," said Harkaway.

"Why not, sar?"

"Why not? You know why not; it would slip half way, and thus cause him endless agony."

"Him not die too quick, sar," said Sunday; "die a little bit at a time like, nice and comfortable."

In spite of the solemnity of the occasion, they could not help forgiving Sunday's idea of making their enemy die "nice and comfortable."

"Let it be properly done," said Harkaway sternly.

"Yes, sar."

The cheerfulness with which he assented made Harkaway still have his misgivings.

"I have already said once, Sunday," he said, "that we don't want to torture him. We want to put him out of the way of doing more mischief, as we would kill a scorpion or any other venomous reptile, but we will not have him put to any unnecessary pain."

"Yes, sar."

The making of the noose was taken out of Sunday's hands, and personally superintended by Magog Brand.

It was tested fairly and found to be satisfactory.

"Ready."

The rope was thrown across the branch of the nearest tree. Toro turned faint.

"Up with him!"

They got about him, and lifted him from the ground.

Sunday got his hand down the prisoner's neckcloth, and contrived to give him a wrench or two that became each instant more and more unendurable.

"Aha, Massa Toro poro!" said the negro, kicking up his legs gleefully; "take that and that!"

And "that," we can assure you, was not pleasant.

As Sunday had dropped upon a place which caused the

prisoner the liveliest agony, he did not fail to profit by it.

He pressed harder and harder there, and Toro yelled with pain until Harkaway interfered.

"That is against orders, Sunday," he said, sharply.

"Him a dam tief, sar, and he make dis chile smell pertiklar agony on him nose once, sar, in de hotel, and now dis chile give him toko!"

He did it, too.

Toko being administered—whatever "toko" might be—the unhappy prisoner yelled with pain.

"Cry out, you cuss!—you polecat!—you wiper!—you rat!"

At each epithet he gave Toro some little proof of his attention.

"Brave savage!" exclaimed Toro, bitterly, "worthy of your brave masters. You can torture a prisoner when he is well tied up, and when you are at least ten to one."

"Sunday," said Harkaway, sternly, "unless you desist, you shall not stay here."

"All right, massa."

And then he gave him a final dig.

It was a good one too.

Toro turned deadly pale with rage.

"Brave men," he said, with a sneer of profound contempt, "bold hearts! Why, if I had my arms free, you would fly for your very lives—aye, all of you, craven curs!"

"Oho!" laughed Magog Brand.

"Be not so boastful," cried Harvey. "Did you not in a most cowardly way take advantage of me, and strike me brutally, when helpless, and on the ground? If you had been a brave man, you would have stood before me on equal terms."

"True," said Harkaway, "he is a coward, for he was one of three that tried to take the life of a young boy."

"So I know to my sorrow," said young Jack. "But I wouldn't have him tortured, brutally as he used me."

"You are about as humane as the rest of them," retorted the giant, with a sneer.

"Let him go," said young Jack. "He'll promise never to molest us any more."

"He'll promise, perhaps," said Harvey, "but we know how much he would keep to his word."

"Come, we are losing time," said the dwarf.

The rope was got ready.

The end was thrown over the tree.

The noose was around the brigand's neck.

"If you have any last wish to make," said Harkaway, "any prayer to utter, now is the time. You must die, Toro, but I would not endanger your future life as well as this."

He changed colour.

But never a word escaped him.

The last moment was near.

"Sunday."

"Yes, sar."

"Take the end of that rope."

"Yes, sar."

"Be ready."

"Quite ready, Massa Harkaway. Shall I pull up?"

It was shocking to hear his cheerful voice as he said this.

Not one could have dreamt that he was talking of sending a fellow-creature out of the world.

"You have nothing to say?" asked Harkaway of the brigand.

Not a word.

A slight gnawing of the lips.

A faint shudder shook his frame.

Otherwise you would scarcely have known that the doomed man was cognisant of what was going on.

A pause.

"Sunday," said the dwarf, in dull, solemn tones, that inspired the listeners with awe, "ready!"

Sunday gave a tug, the rope strained, and Toro the giant was swinging in the air.

* * * * *

Suddenly a loud and stern voice was heard.

"Stop that!"

The speaker was Jefferson.

He had been quiet for some time.

Then the huge American, with a stroke of his knife,

severed the rope, and Toro dropped on to the ground, considerably frightened, but little hurt.

"I'm not going to look on, and see a man—well not a man—a skunk like that wiped out in cold blood."

"What do you mean?"

"I won't have it. Get up, Toro."

The latter obeyed.

"Hark you," said Jefferson. "You are an outrageous—the biggest villain I ever came across, but you shall have a chance for your life."

The Italian's face lighted up at this.

"Do you hear me—a chance for your life?"

"Yes?"

"Then answer me quickly," retorted Jefferson, "or I'll leave you to the rope. Have you any courage left?"

"More than the rest of the company put together, it strikes me," replied Toro, sullenly.

"Modest man," said Magog Brand, with a dry laugh.

"Well, my friend," said Jefferson, "now here's a proposition for you. You can have your choice."

"Speak."

"You can be hanged if you like, or you can be set free and fight it out."

"With all? Well, you are almost enough for me," said Toro, looking around him.

"I don't mean with all," answered Jefferson, "only with one."

"Which?"

"Me."

"Humph!"

The brigand looked just a little bit uneasy.

"It was undeniably a joyous thing to escape death upon any terms, and such a death.

But Toro had once a slight brush with Jefferson, you remember.

And the recollection of it was anything but pleasant.

In all his life, he had encountered but one single man with whom he feared to cope.

This man was Jefferson, the American.

"Well, what do you say?"

"I consent."

"You will fight for your life?"

"I will."

It was reluctantly given.

It was, however, a matter of choice between two evils. Bad as he was, he naturally regarded this as the least.

"Set his arms free," said Jefferson, coolly.

"At this point, Harkaway thought it high time to interfere.

"Jefferson," he said, "this must not be."

"Why not?"

"Because it's tempting Providence."

"How?"

"He is delivered into our hands, and you have no right to run any risk in the matter. I feel that it is quite lawful to put the villain out of the way of doing further mischief."

"That's my intention," said the Kentuckian, grimly, "only I like to do it in my own way, that's all. I don't like murder; it doesn't agree with my notions at all."

"But why should you risk your life? He has done me more harm than you, and if he must fight for his life, let me be the man that tries strength and skill against him," cried Harkaway. "And I say——"

"Say nothing, Harkaway," replied the other, interrupting him, "for it will make bad blood between us if you interfere. It will sever our friendship altogether."

This was enough.

Harkaway liked Jefferson too well to press the matter further.

"Cut the cords."

This was obeyed.

"Stand clear," said Jefferson, "and give us plenty of room and no favour. Now clear away."

This was done.

The two darkies climbed up into the branches of a tree, from which they commanded an excellent view of the scene.

"Harkaway," said the Kentuckian.

"Yes."

"You have heard the understanding between us; my word must be attended to."

It shall."

"If he gets the best of it, he is to go free."

"Very good."

"And I know you will not go against this, my wish."

"As it is your wish, Jefferson, of course not."

"Very good."

Toro glanced about him with a restless look, which, however, did not escape the lynx-eyed Kentuckian.

"If he should attempt to bolt, you will shoot him down as remorselessly as if he were a rabid dog."

"We will."

"Stand clear, then."

"Now then, Signor Toro, when you are ready."

This was a moment of breathless interest.

The Italian closed his eyes in a semi-sleepy manner, and peered at his adversary through his lashes.

He waited a moment, hoping to take him off his guard.

Then, as Jefferson turned his head for a moment towards Magog, the huge Italian came at him like a bull that he got his name from.

Jefferson was ready, however.

He stepped, back, drew in his right arm, and then, as Toro came, he shot it out full at him with his whole force.

A dull, heavy thud followed, and Toro's huge frame quivered all over.

It steadied him in his headlong rush—dazed him.

As he shook his head, half stunned at that steam hammer, you could see upon his forehead the signs of such a blow as would have put an end to you or any smaller man upon the instant.

"Ugh!"

"Bravo, Massa Jefferson," cried Sunday, up in the tree.

"Dat was a stinger," said Monday.

It was indeed a doughty blow, and Toro did not appear to want any more of the kind.

"Come along, Toro," said Jefferson; "there is more waiting."

Toro paused, but quickly went at it again.

Jefferson put his fists up, and as Toro got within shot again, he let fly.

Toro guarded wildly, but Jefferson planted his blows just when and where he pleased.

And he pleased to plant them pretty well all over that huge carcase.

One, two, and one on the chest.

"Bang!" cried Sunday, in absurd delight.

“Dat’s done him good!”

The sight of his own blood made the brigand furious.

He rushed upon Jefferson with the fury of a wild beast.

And much to the surprise of all, Jefferson fell to the ground, borne down by the great force of the brigand’s powerful blow.

But before he could throw himself on Jefferson, the latter was on his feet, and by a straight hit from the shoulder he drove Toro back.

Spank!

One on the cheek.

Ding dong—two more in sharp succession.

“Postman’s knock,” cried Jefferson, laughing.

The jeers of the two niggers made the Italian mad.

He made another rush at the American, and closing with him suddenly, again brought him with a heavy thud to the ground.

Quick as thought Jefferson was up and the brigand down.

Toro went at it again and again, vainly endeavouring to close with his adversary.

But each time he got a fresh visitation of an alarming kind.

The brigand’s blood flowed freely.

Jefferson had shown the spectators something which they had by no means been prepared for.

He was a splendid boxer.

Words cannot describe the pent-up fury of the passionate Italian giant at the bitterness of the humiliation thus put upon him.

Goaded finally on to utter madness by the jeers of the two niggers in the tree, he gathered himself together for one mighty effort.

Ducking his head to avoid the sledge hammer fists of the terrible American, he rushed at him, intending to butt him in the stomach.

Jefferson waited for him.

Then stepping aside in the very nick of time, he swung his clenched fist round, caught him fairly upon the ear, and stretched him senseless upon the ground.

CHAPTER XIV.

"BRAVO !"

"Hurrah !"

"Three cheers for Mr. Jefferson !" cried young Jack.

"That last was a most elegant chop," said Mr. Mole, who had been shivering with fright behind a tree from the moment that they had cut the brigand's bonds, "most elegant. I declare it almost reminds me of myself in my best days."

"You're pilin' it on, Mr. Mole," said Jefferson, smiling.

"I'm sincere," said Mr. Mole, blandly. "That was one of my favourite hits."

"Indeed."

"Fact, sir."

"That's quite true," said young Jack, maliciously. "I remember that you taught Mr. Pike that hit when you gave him boxing lessons on board."

"Eh, what?"

He did not like that hint.

He felt sure that young Jack must be laughing at him. So he sang small at present.

The Italian lay still, motionless, insensible.

"Get him some water."

The darkies did not care to move from their perches to help the brigand.

Magog Brand ran for water and dashed it in his face.

Slowly he revived.

They washed the blood from his face and head and helped him to rise.

"Now, Signor Maccaroni," said Jefferson, "do you think you'll be more civil in future?"

Toro hung his bruised head.

"You have earned the right to scoff me," he said bitterly; "laugh on."

"I don't want to laugh——"

"Oh, you can; you have it all your own way. But in my country we don't consider it generous to rail at a beaten foe."

"Nor here, either."

"So it appears," muttered Toro, bitterly.

"The scoundrel," ejaculated Harvey. "Does he expect generous treatment? Why, where would any one of us have been had the conditions been reversed? Supposing any one of us had been in the power of your gang, what mercy would you have shown? Consideration, you unblushing vagabond!"

Every word Harvey said was full of reason.

What indeed would have been the fate of any unfortunate individual who had fallen into their clutches?

They had shown often enough what mercy they could show.

"You can laugh at your triumph," said Toro, "but it is not so great after all."

"Indeed."

"Oho!"

"No, indeed."

"And why?"

"Yes, why?" asked Magog Brand. "I am curious to hear what new impudence the rascal has to advance."

"We are not used to fight like that," said Toro, "like savages. This is your American civilisation."

"Beg pardon, Signor Maccaroni," said Jefferson, with a good-humoured laugh, "nothing of the kind. That's British. I inherit that by instinct, by virtue of English blood, from my English mother, God bless her!"

"Your mother——"

"Now, silence!" said Jefferson, peremptorily, "for if you let your foul tongue utter one syllable against my mother, you'll get goss, I promise you. You mayn't like my English instincts, but by gum, sir, you'll relish my American instincts still less, I reckon."

"In civilised lands men fight otherwise."

"How?"

"With that."

He pointed here to a bowie knife which Magog carried in his belt.

"Are you better at that than the other?" inquired Jefferson, carelessly.

Toro's eyes glistened.

"You wouldn't care to face me if I had that in my hand."

"Oh, yes, I should."

"Bah!"

"How d'ye spell it?" asked the American, with comic contempt.

"Give it me and try."

"Willingly," said Jefferson, calmly. "Magog, give it to him."

Magog obeyed.

Yes, to the unutterable horror and dismay of most of the spectators, they absolutely armed the formidable Italian with a knife.

Jefferson the same instant plucked out his own bowie, and stood upon guard.

"I'll not permit this," said Harvey.

And he would have rushed forward.

But the dwarf held him back.

"Stand back, Mr. Harvey," he said, sternly. "If you dare to meddle in it, you'll get our man spiked by that giant."

"Oh, Mr. Brand, Mr. Brand!" exclaimed Harvey; "this must not be allowed."

"What?"

"What have you done?"

"Nothing."

"Jefferson will be stabbed—killed perhaps."

"Don't you worry yourself. Jeff has shown you a taste of his quality. Now you just wait a bit."

"Toro," said Jefferson, "this is your last chance; let nothing distract your attention, for I warrant I shall take every advantage this time. Your eye and your strong hand must save you, if you are to be saved at all."

Toro grunted out an ungracious reply.

Then he proceeded to take off his neckerchief and bind the knife to his hand with it.

The same office was meanwhile performed for Jefferson by his trusty friend the dwarf.

"Settle it quickly, Jeff," said Magog Brand.

"Very good."

It was amazing to hear the cool way in which they spoke it.

Anyone would have thought they were speaking of slaughtering a lamb or some helpless animal, instead of facing a formidable and armed enemy.

"Now then, Toro," said Jefferson, "are you ready? Look out—guard."

"Look to yourself," cried the brigand, fiercely; "this time the game is against you."

"Come on," said the American; "you waste time."

It was a desperate sight to behold.

Two huge men, armed with deadly weapons, ready to drink each other's life blood.

It was a fearsome sight to see them crouching and creeping round each other, with their eyes fixed with fierce intensity on each other's.

Each waiting to spring.

Involuntarily it called up descriptions of the gladiatorial combats in the Roman arenas of old.

Slowly, cautiously they trod the ground.

The lookers-on held their breaths in suspense.

"Hah!"

An involuntary gasp of fear from the whole of the spectators.

"Look, look!"

"He's down!"

Jefferson had stumbled over something.

Toro the giant was upon him instantly.

But Jefferson, catching himself nimbly, had only fallen upon one knee, and quick as an eye could wink, he was upon his guard.

As Toro bored in with uplifted knife, he caught his wrist.

Then with a mighty effort he dragged himself up.

And now, in the space of twenty seconds, there ensued a scene of such pent-up excitement as baffles description.

Jefferson struck as he rose, but being taken somewhat at a disadvantage, the Italian with a dexterous jerk twisted the knife fairly out of his hand, and sent it flying.

Fear—a deadly fear—was expressed in every face.

Their gallant champion was worsted.

Harkaway was about to step forward, but was stopped by Jefferson's loud voice—

"Keep back, keep back!"

"Wait!"

"The fight is not yet over."

Jefferson had shown how he could fight on equal terms.

He now showed how he could fight in the face of disaster.

He grappled his colossal enemy boldly.

Gave him one mighty hug, then lifting him fairly off his legs, he threw him over his hip on to the ground.

In such a way was it done, that when the Italian measured his length upon the ground, his own knife was seen buried up to the very hilt in his side.

The fight was over. They ran in, and closed round the ex-brigand. Not a sigh—not a breath. It was all over.

"There," said Jefferson, adjusting his disordered dress in the coolest manner in the world; "that's over, and I don't think that that skunk will worry us any more."

Toro, the brigand and murderer, had indeed this time met with more than his match in the brave American.

"Your American and English blood seem to mingle well together, Jefferson," said Harkaway, advancing. "You are indeed a fine representative of two nations mingled in one."

"Right, Harkaway," cried Jefferson; "and you are a fine, bold Englishman. Give me your hand."

And then the American, with the grip of a vice, seized the hand of Jack Harkaway.

CHAPTER XV.

OUR friends gazed in silence on the Italian brigand for some time.

"It is a just fate for the villain," said Harkaway, after a long silence; "but what shall we do with the body?"

"Oh, leave the fellow here," said Jefferson. "I dare say some of the gang will find an opportunity of giving the body decent burial."

Then Harkaway and his friends returned home, after casting in silence one more look at the brigand.

* * * * *

Mr. Mole's nerves being out of order, he was recommended to take sea baths.

So a short trip was got up to an adjacent watering place.

It was upon the occasion of Mr Mole's second sea bath that he met with an adventure.

Sunday used to drive the whole bathing party, consisting of himself and brother Monday, young Jack and Mr.

Mole, down to the particular spot of the coast where they were in the habit of taking their daily dip.

On the first morning, they were just nearing the bathing place, when suddenly there was a rush, a deep, baying sound, and a huge hound bounded over the hedge.

"What a fine fellow!" exclaimed young Jack.

"Beau'ful!" added Monday. "Big as a donkey."

"A very fine Newfoundland," said Mr. Mole, putting in his eyeglass.

"Eh!"

"What?" added Monday, with a grin.

"Mr. Mole is not 'doggy,'" explained young Jack; "he doesn't know the difference between a bloodhound and a Newfoundland."

The laugh that this created put Mr. Mole upon his dignity at once.

"Master Harkaway," said he, grandly, "I have kept Newfoundlands and bloodhounds too, before you were born or thought of."

"Indeed, sir."

"Yes, sir; and poodles and terriers too, as well as greyhounds, staghounds, foxhounds; in fact every kind of hound. No man was more 'doggy,' as you were pleased to call it."

"I should never have thought it," said young Jack.

"No, you are a thoughtless youth," said Mr. Mole.

"True, sir."

The bloodhound came bounding up to the side of the trap.

"Keep off, you ugly debil," said Sunday.

"Moderate your language, you nigger," said Mr. Mole.

"Dat Tiger am berry exceedingly damn dangerous, brudder Mole."

"Pish!" said Mr. Mole; "pshaw and tush likewise. Tiger, indeed!"

"Yes, sar; Tiger."

"Bloodhound."

"Tiger's the animal's name, brudder Mole."

Just then the dog jumped up, and made a snap, seemingly at Sunday's legs.

Sunday gave a howl and dropped the reins.

They were, however very promptly caught by Monday, who whipped up and drove on rapidly.

But Tiger was not to be shaken off.

He bounded after the trap, barking in a way that appeared to frighten poor Sunday out of his seven senses.

"You craven-hearted crew," said Mr. Mole, "what is there to be afraid of?"

"Tiger."

"He shan't hurt you. If you are afraid, I will tackle the creature single-handed, and drive him off," said the brave Mole.

"He eat you, sar."

"That 'ere damn cannibal, brudder Mole, eat three niggers. Him a reg'lar ole nigger hunter, and he like the smell ob nigger's flesh. He want to taste dis chile, I'se sure."

"Rubbish!"

"He do, he do."

Tiger barked and jumped up, slily encouraged by Monday, and Sunday appeared to grow more and more alarmed at every step.

"There," said Isaac Mole, looking about him, "there you see the infinite superiority of the white over the coloured races; fancy a white man being afraid of a dog!"

"Fancy," echoed young Jack, who smelt fun afar off.

"Though that dog might have eaten forty niggers, I should think no more of tackling him than of playing with a pet poodle. Here boy! hi, boy! here! here!"

He held out his hand over the side of the cart, but when the bloodhound jumped up at him, he withdrew it very sharply.

"And so they say he has eaten a nigger?" said Mr. Mole.

"Yes, sar."

"A whole nigger?"

"Ebery morsel, sar."

Mr. Mole smiled superciliously at this.

"He must have a wonderful digestion, for my part, I'd sooner have a nice dinner of shark or toasted crocodile, than the tenderest nigger that was ever raised."

"Or a donkey," suggested young Jack.

"Yes, or a donkey."

"Dat looks as if Massa Mole was a cannibal too," said Monday, readily.

Young Jack laughed heartily at this, but at the same time

he explained to Monday that he was mistaken in calling Mr. Mole a cannibal because of his preference for donkey, inasmuch as cannibalism meant eating one's own species.

"Dat's it, Massa Jack," said Monday.

"Donkey am Mr. Mole's speechy ; yah, yah !"

At this moment, a turn in the road brought them in sight of a low hut, at the door of which stood the very man with the gun whose sudden appearance up the road with the bloodhound had so startled the party.

He had returned across country.

"Hi, Tiger ! Tiger !" he called.

The dog ran off immediately.

"Are we near the rocks ?" asked young Jack.

"Close by," replied the man with the gun.

"You have a fine dog there."

"I have ! and as good as he's handsome."

"Dangerous ?"

"Sometimes."

"Bark much ?"

"No, he bites."

"Only bites ?" said young Jack laughing.

"I didn't say only bites. He worries and gnaws."

"Would he pull down a man ?" asked young Jack.

"Some," replied the cottager, significantly.

"He could tackle a nigger ?"

"A nigger !" replied the man, grimly ; "a dozen."

This confirmed what Sunday had said.

So Mr. Mole thought that it would be as well to propitiate both dog and master.

So he held out a bit of biscuit at Tiger, who first glanced at his master for permission to take it, and then he jumped up and snapped the biscuit out of Mr. Mole's hand so suddenly that the latter drew back his hand much quicker than he had advanced it.

It was rather curious to remark that, although Sunday had professed to be so frightened of the bloodhound, he got out of the trap and walked past him to the rear of the cottage, where an old woman was engaged grubbing about a bit of garden ground.

"I see you've got Tiger still, Mrs. Gubbins," said Sunday.

The old woman stared hard at Sunday for a minute before she recognized him.

"What, that you, Jex?"

"Yes," said Sunday, "dat me, Liz Gubbins."

"What on airth, sar, you dewing here?" asked Mrs. Gubbins. "Come down our parts agin?"

"Yes, Mrs. Gubbins," replied Sunday, "for a spell."

Then he whistled shrilly once or twice, and the bloodhound Tiger came bounding round to the back of the house.

"Tiger, Tiger!" said Sunday; "don't you know your ole friend?"

The dog sniffed about for a minute and then whinnied in token of recognition, and caressed the negro in a way that would have astonished Mr. Mole, who had heard him described as a sort of natural enemy to coloured folks.

"You don't forget, do you, Tiger?"

The bloodhound jumped up and licked and caressed his old friend.

Now when Tiger stood up on his hind legs, he was as tall as Sunday—a truly formidable beast.

"Air you gwine to make a stay 'bout these parts, Cæsar?" asked Mrs. Gubbins.

"On'y a while. My boss has to bathe, and so we'll be here every day."

And with this he went back to the front of the cottage, where the party, having refreshed themselves and rewarded Mr. Gubbins, prepared to resume the journey.

* * * * *

"Massa Jack!"

"Yes, Sunday."

"Would you like to hab a lark wid Massa Mole?"

Jack chuckled.

"Can a duck swim?"

"I can tell you how to hab jolly fun, den, Massa Jack, to morrow morning, if you like."

And when Sunday imparted his scheme to young Jack and to Monday, it was highly approved of, and it was all arranged.

The next morning, just as they passed the Gubbins' cottage, Tiger came bounding out after them, and again Sunday dropped down at the bottom of the trap in abject terror.

"Oh, golly, Massa Jack," he cried, "keep him off."

"I will, Sunday," said young Jack. "Keep snug."

Tiger barked and jumped up, and Sunday seemed to grow more and more terrified every moment.

Mr. Mole smiled and then laughed outright at poor Sunday's fears.

"How ridiculous to see a man so frightened of a dog," he said.

"Drive it away, brudder Mole," implored Sunday.

"Dat dog eat us all up; drive him off."

"I will," said Mr. Mole, blandly.

He leant over the side of the trap, and chivied Tiger away.

But the faithful animal bounded after them again, and nearing the cart, he jumped up, snapping and barking in a way that shook Mr. Mole's nerves, in spite of his evident desire to appear at ease in his mind.

"Poor Tiger!" he said; "poor dog!"

They reached the rocks, and Mr. Mole picked out the nook where he left his clothes regularly, and here he hurriedly undressed.

Sunday did not bathe that morning.

Ordinarily he was the first in the water, for he swam like a fish, and cut all kinds of capers in the water, to the amusement of all the party.

He dared not go into the water, according to his own account.

"Dat dam Tiger'll come and gobble dis chile up," he said; "I'se 'fraid ob my life."

But this, as you may suppose, was not strictly true.

In fact, no sooner was the tutor in the water, than Sunday glided behind the rocks, and softly whistled the bloodhound up.

"You see dem clothes, Tiger?" he said pointing to Mr. Mole's garments.

Tiger barked in reply.

"You sit on 'em," said Sunday, "and don't you let no one touch 'em."

Tiger barked again.

He understood what was said well enough.

He squatted down upon the garments, and looked about him, as much as to say—

"Who'll come and dislodge me? Come, if you dare."

And it would have been a brave man to attempt it.

Young Jack and Monday were soon out of the water, according to a preconcerted arrangement, and Mr. Mole prepared to follow them, when he perceived Tiger on guard.

"Call that dog off," shouted Mr. Mole.

"Tiger, Tiger!" called young Jack.

But Tiger never moved.

He had received his orders; they knew this well, and it was only Sunday who could have induced him to move.

Sunday, however was seemingly too frightened to approach the bloodhound.

"Monday," called Mr. Mole, "Monday do you hear?"

"Yes, sar."

"Drive him off."

"Can't, sar."

"You must."

"Daren't, sar."

"But I want my clothes," cried Mr. Mole.

"You frighten him off, Massa Mole," answered Monday; "Tiger don't care nuffin' for a nigger."

"Nonsense."

"He's torn a poor fellow to bits to-day," said young Jack, "and I don't half like his looks."

"Rubbish."

"He'd be afraid of you," said young Jack.

Mr. Mole perceived that he was expected to show his prowess, and so, although he scarcely relished the job, he advanced out of the water to within a few yards of the bloodhound, and endeavoured to coax him off.

"Good dog, good dog!" cried Mole.

Tiger growled.

Then, as Mr. Mole drew nearer, he snarled, snapped, and showed his fangs.

And such fangs, too.

Mole dashed back into the water as though he was shot.

"Can't any body get him off?" said Mr. Mole. "I'm getting the shivers, and want to come out."

No one could, however, induce Tiger to move from his post.

Isaac Mole, in sheer despair, approached the dog once



"MOLE TRIES TO COAX THE LITTLE DOG TO GIVE UP HIS CLOTHES."—ADVENT. IN AMER. AND CUBA, PAGE 96.

more, for he had formed the somewhat rash resolve to drive him away. But oh, for his rashness!

Alas! for his resolve!

He tried to persuade the bloodhound to quit his post, but he little knew Tiger's sense of discipline.

It would have been as easy to move one of the pyramids of Egypt as to dislodge the bloodhound.

"Here, Bijo!" said Mr. Mole, coaxingly. "Hi, Towzer! Good dog—beast! you won't move, eh?—here—st—st—st!"

He held an imaginary something in his hand which he expected Tiger to take for a tempting morsel of food.

Tiger looked, and even sniffed, but no more.

Even his sniff was scornful.

Tiger was immovable.

"Jack, my dear boy, where are you? Do please go and tell Mrs. Mole to bring me some clothes to put on."

No answer came from Jack.

"You beast!" said Mole, turning his attention once more to the dog; "I wish I had a gun or a pistol, I'd brain you—or I'd try at it—you beast! Oh, if I could only get my boot! It is very hard to be crippling one's solitary foot while one's solitary boot is under the custody of a notorious man-eater! Oh! oh! my poor foot!"

He was on the shingles, and the truth was that they crippled him, in spite of his having a stick to help him along, and just as he got unusually vituperative, a nubbly pebble mangled his little toe cruelly.

"Oh! confound the dog! The beast is inaccessible to argument—it's as bootless as I am."

"Oh, that's a joke," cried young Jack, who was within hearing.

"You've got your stick, Mr. Mole," shouted young Jack; "why don't you drop into him with it?—you'd drive him off."

"It's all very well to say why? I'd precious soon show him if I had my clothes on."

"He won't hurt you much, I dare say," said young Jack.

"Him not gnaw you a lot," said Monday; "you too thin and gristly, Massa Mole."

"Yah! yah!" cried Sunday.

Now Mr. Mole resolved to recover his boot at all hazards.

With that he could mount the shingles fearlessly, he thought. So he made an effort.

Creeping up, he took his stick by the wet end, and made a dash at the boot with the crook.

"Ugh—wah!" snarled Tiger, showing *such* fangs.

With more haste than grace Mr. Mole retreated.

Over he went down the beach head first.

And then, as he rose to the surface, he was spitting and spluttering.

"He's got it dis time," laughed Sunday.

"Shipped a lot," said young Jack.

"Capital physic!" shouted Monday. "You hab water first, and rum when you get home, Massa Mole."

Isaac Mole was outraged.

He arose majestically, and blew away his long, straggling, damp locks, which tickled his purple nose.

Thoughts of dire vengeance filled the tutor's breast.

"If I only had you in London for an hour," he said, shaking his stick at Tiger, "I'd teach you! They should soon find your bloated corpus floating gracefully on the bosom of old father Thames. A nice bit of liver, savoured with a nice little something from the chemist's, should soon wind up your clock, you beast!"

He worked himself up into a towering rage, and was just going to throw his stick at the faithful bloodhound, when he thought better of it.

His stick was a crutch. His stick might yet have to serve him as a weapon of defence.

Ha! A brilliant thought! His leg!

That wooden member was of little use momentarily, so Mr. Mole, balancing himself dexterously for a while on his natural leg, unscrewed his artificial limb.

"Now you shall have it!" he muttered between his set teeth.

He meant it.

Indeed, if Tiger only got half what Mr. Mole meant him to have, Tiger's days were indeed numbered.

Isaac Mole poised the wooden leg in his hand.

"Now for it," said the tutor, "one, two—I don't care where I hit, for, damme, I can't get out of the water without my clothes—three!"

The wooden leg flew straight at the mark.

Yes, and what's more, it might have landed poor Tiger heavily, had he not at that identical moment bent his noble head to take a sniff at a diminutive crab, which had just excited his curiosity by crawling past his paws!

"Missed!"

"Missed!"

The words were echoed from behind the rocks.

Young Jack, Monday, and Sunday had seen it all.

Despair.

And the most humiliating part of the business was that Tiger bent his noble head and only sniffed, and gazed occasionally at the unfortunate Isaac Mole with the same stolid indifference.

"A-chew!—dear me!" exclaimed the tutor. "I know I shall catch my death of cold. Oh, will no one fetch Mrs. Mole?"

It was high time for the spectators to interfere.

So Mr. Mole's pupil took the initiative.

"Get Mr. Mole some other clothes," said young Jack; "do you hear, Sunday?"

"Yes, sar."

The darky disappeared, and presently he brought some clothes bundled up under his arms, and Mr. Mole crawled ashore a few yards off his own clothes.

"Jack, my dear boy, it is very kind of you, but cannot some of you drive the brute away? That animal is evidently a very dangerous one."

"He is."

"Be quick with my clothes. Any thing to get back in, for if I catch cold, I had much better have stopped away altogether."

He took up one of the garments, and shook it out.

And then he gave a cry of amazement.

"What's this? There's some mistake."

"A mistake?" said young Jack. "What mistake?"

"This is an old woman's gown."

"No matter," cried young Jack, "you will look well in any thing, sir."

"Dat's all I could get," said Sunday. "Mother Gubbins lent it for Massa Mole. She ain't got no other, and ole Gubbins ain't at home."

"Confound old Gubbins!" exclaimed Mr. Mole; "I can never go along dressed up like that."

"Then don't dress, sar," suggested Sunday; "come along with no clothes."

"Impossible!"

"You must."

"Ridiculous!" said Mr. Mole. "Besides consider——"

"Then you must drive Tiger; I can't do it."

"Dear me, dear me," said the tutor, in considerable distress, "this is very unpleasant."

"It is, sir."

"Sunday, or you, Monday, my dear friend, kindly lend me your clothes, and take my place in the water."

"Not if him knows it, sar," cried Monday, with a grin; "dis child am berry well with his clothes on. You better go home in de old woman's gown; you look a berry fine gal."

"What, in the gown?"

"Yes, sar."

"Nonsense."

"Shall we go on, sir?" asked young Jack, sily, "and tell the old woman you don't want her clothes?"

"No, no," replied Mr. Mole, quickly. "I'd better go home in her old gown, than nothing."

And so he began to dress.

When once they got him into the gown the rest was comparatively easy.

There was a bonnet of white straw, and of that shape which our grandmothers knew as the "coal scuttle," and a shawl as well.

And in this eccentric garb Mr. Mole trotted back to the trap, while his companions were convulsed with laughter.

"Massa Mole makes a lubly gal," said Monday, with a grin; "on'y it's a pity dat his petticoats ain't longer, for he looks like one ob dem gals what dances at the theayter."

CHAPTER XVI.

WHEREIN MR. MOLE MORTALLY OFFENDS A TERRIBLE YANKEE.

MR. MOLE's adventure at the bath with the dog abruptly terminated his stay there. -

Next morning Mr. Mole received notice that a letter of importance was waiting for him at the Harkaways' residence in New York.

Mr. Mole was glad enough to depart, as he had been thinking and dreaming ever since that he had been torn to pieces by the man-eating dog, Tiger.

On arriving at New York with young Jack, they learned some highly interesting news from their friends.

After that desperate battle of the giants, the party paid another visit to the woods to see if the vanquished Toro's body was still there.

But judge of their astonishment when they found that the body had disappeared.

There could be but one way of accounting for this.

The ex-brigand's comrades had carried it off. They learned also, to their intense disappointment and disgust, that the rest of the Bowery gang had escaped in the vessel commanded by Captain Clemmans. But whither bound?

"I understand their ship has sailed for the China Seas," said the detective, entering at the moment, "but we'll have them."

Harkaway handed Mr. Mole his letter.

When he had scanned it down once, he cried—"Oh, my!"

"Oh, yours!" said Harvey.

"Oh, his!" said young Jack.

"I beg you will not conjugate in such loud tones," said Mr. Mole, smiling complacently. "This letter is an official document. It is from one of the English consuls in China. I am advised of the melancholy death of the gentleman to whom I disposed of my property there."

"The tea plantation?" asked Dick Harvey.

"Yes. The gentleman has made me his heir," replied Mr. Mole.

"Good gracious!"

"Wish you joy."

"Long life to Mr. Mole!"

Mr. Mole was silent.

His brow grew cloudy.

"It is accompanied by a certain condition."

"What?"

"That I should go and live on the property."

"Why not?"

"I should have to go and leave you," said Mr. Mole.

"But you cannot refuse your property."

"I would, sooner than leave you."

Mr. Mole was quite moved as he spoke, and his manner told them as plainly as words could that in spite of all his eccentricities, he was warmly attached to the Harkaways.

"Well," said Harkaway the elder, "we shall have to go with you, Mr. Mole."

"Where?"

"To China."

"What!"

"I mean it," said Harkaway. "We can't let you miss your chances for our sakes. So, if you go, why, we will all go together. We do not fear meeting the Bowery gang even there."

The arrangement was hastily made. But they adhered to it, as you will see later on.

Meanwhile, Mr. Mole had been somewhat disturbed in his mind by what he had heard, for he did not wish ever to hear more of Hunston's gang.

"Did you say China, Mr. Pike?" he asked.

"I did."

"Are you sure that is the real destination of these robbers and murderers?"

"As sure as one can well be. I have the best information on that point."

Isaac Mole was so startled by the singularity of the coincidence, that he could not get over it.

"Most extraordinary—marvellous, sir—simply marvellous, I call it."

"What is, sir?" demanded Harkaway.

"That the Bowery gang should have shipped for the very part that we are going to."

Young Jack looked anything but pleased.

"I am not glad to hear that," he said. "I do not wish to see them again. But are you sure?"

"We have Mr. Pike's word for it."

"Come, Mr. Pike," said Harkaway, "we must to business." So they departed, leaving young Jack alone with Mr. Mole.

"Well, sir," said Jack, "if we should meet the gang, you will have a chance of showing once more your great courage, for, you know, in the fight with Toro you had not a fair chance, sir."

"Jack, my dear boy," retorted Mr. Mole, promptly, "do not poke your fun at your venerable friend and preceptor."

"Fun, sir?" exclaimed Jack.

"You are a pretty innocent," said Mr. Mole. "So none of your tricks upon travellers, or if I don't wig you, my name is not——"

"Ikey Mole
Was a swipecy ole soul,
And a swipecy ole soul was he,"

sang Monday just outside the window at this precise instant.

Young Jack heard it, and was ready to split his sides with laughter.

"The lazy, idle, insolent black thief!" ejaculated Mr. Mole, indignantly. "He's actually standing under the window, yelling his trash."

"Very wrong," said young Jack.

"Wrong!" I'll teach him."

A plan of speedy vengeance had flashed across Mr. Mole's mind.

Seizing a large water bottle which stood in the centre of the table, he rushed to the window, and stretching forth his arm, emptied the water—as he thought—upon the darkey's devoted head.

At the self-same moment, Dick Harvey might have been seen to glide out of the house.

Suddenly a loud outcry arose beneath, and a voice in indignation was heard to lift itself—

"Darn my feathers, if I only had the skunk what hev' turned the tap on my ringulets, I'd lift his hair—some."

Mr. Mole started.

"What can that be?" he asked.

"I'll see," replied young Jack, with alacrity.

He opened the window and looked out, for he strongly suspected there was some fun on.

Yes, there was Harvey busily engaged with Monday, who caught a little of the water—very little, by the way—and they were laughing in anticipation over some scheme which Harvey was proposing.

"What's the matter?" called out young Jack.

"Hush, Jack, hush!" said Mr. Mole. "What is the use of taking any notice?"

"It's all very fine, sir," said young Jack, turning round to Mr. Mole, and looking very frightened, "but you have thrown the water over a gentleman. He looks very fierce; he has two revolvers and a bowie-knife stuck in his belt, and is coming this way."

"Good gracious me!" ejaculated Mr. Mole, "is it possible?"

"It is possible. Come and see for yourself," said young Jack.

"No, no," said Mr. Mole, very much alarmed. "Come away, Jack."

Just then the same irate voice which had been heard before exclaimed—

"Was that you, my bleating babe?"

"No, sir, it was Mr. Mole."

"Hold your tongue, Jack," said the tutor, in alarm.

"Do you want to make a disturbance?"

"No, sir; but he thought it was me."

"Yew, was it?" repeated the voice below.

"No, Mr. Mole, and he is up here, sir, with the water bottle in his hand."

"Mole! Darn Mole! I'll 'Mole' him!"

"How dare you, Jack?" exclaimed Mr. Mole, in a whisper of alarm.

"Say, my youthful stranger," called out the indignant unseen below, "you can pass the word that Solomon Brick is coming up to settle matters right away, and that if I don't slice his darned liver in half a whittle, he may jest call me the milkiest coon in the Union."

"Dear me, dear me!" exclaimed Mr. Mole, "I fear there has been some great mistake."

"Rather!"

"These Americans are very violent, too, I have heard."

"Very."

"Dear, dear! how very unfortunate."

"More than unfortunate," said young Jack. "He's coming up. Now is the time to show your native-born courage, sir."

"But I don't want to show my native-born courage, Jack, at this moment."

"Well, sir, he is coming up."

"Never!" cried Mr. Mole, now thoroughly alarmed.

At the very instant came a loud knock at the door.

"Come in," cried young Jack.

"No, no," cried Mr. Mole, stumping hurriedly across the room, and locking the door. "Who's there?"

"Me, siree."

"Who's that?"

"Solomon Brick."

Mr. Mole's countenance fell.

"I've come to see Mole, the skunk that dared to throw water over me," said the irate Brick, with the strongest nasal twang that Mr. Mole had ever heard. "I've come jest to wind up his clock right away—that's so. Open the door."

"I can't," answered Mr. Mole in great confusion.

"We're out."

"What?"

"We're invisible," stammered Mr. Mole; "we're dressing—in fact we are in bed, and—and we're taking a bath."

"That's high pressure some," returned Mr. Solomon Brick through the keyhole. "You Britishers pile it on considerable."

"We do—we do," answered Mr. Mole eagerly.

"Right, siree bob; you contrive to do a few things at once."

"Yes, sir."

"Well, Mole, I'll wait for you. I'll give you five minutes and I'll kill time sharpening up my prodder for your ribs."

"Oh!" cried poor Mole, "his prodder for my ribs!"

"It'll go through you better," continued the fire-eater outside.

"Bloodthirsty monster!" groaned poor Mr. Mole.

"Mr. Mole says you are a bloodthirsty monster, sir," cried Jack through the keyhole.

"Yes, I am that, and I'll load my six-shooters ready for him."

"Ruffian!" chattered Mole, from between his teeth.

"Now, old boss, I give you two minutes more, and then I'll pop the muzzle of my barker to the keyhole, and bust the lock off; and then I'll come in with my bowie out, and carve away merrily at your old carcase."

Mr. Mole staggered a little, and caught at the chimney for support.

He felt that he was lost.

"Carve away at my old carcase!" exclaimed Mole. "Oh, horror!"

This person, calling himself Mr. Solomon Brick, was evidently the typical Yankee rowdy that he had read of in English books.

"Yes, sir," said young Jack, "I think he means it. Can I give any message to Mrs. Mole for you, sir, before you are carved up?"

"No, Jack, my dear boy; I would like to deliver the message myself to my dear wife. Cannot I escape, Jack, for the fact is, I don't feel well?"

"There is no way to escape, sir; you had better meet your fate like a man."

"I should prefer it some other day, Jack," cried Mole, trembling; "at the present moment I am not quite ready to be carved up; the operation must be most unpleasant."

Mole was conscious of having mortally offended and insulted an out-and-out Yankee rowdy, and he felt that his life was not worth an hour's purchase.

Had Isaac Mole been an artist, his fancy sketch would have shown a long, thin man, with a square lower jaw, and a tuft on the chin, and a broad-brimmed conical hat.

Had he sketched Dick Harvey, it would have borne a life-like resemblance to Solomon Brick.

And this is not to be wondered at, seeing that Dick Harvey and Solomon Brick were one and the same.

"Now, siree," said the fire-eater, "my patience is at an end, and I guess I'm gwine to blaze away." Mole groaned.

"I'll just count out three," pursued the irascible Solomon. "Now, oncet, twicet, and——"

"Stop, stop!" cried Mr. Mole: "don't be rash, sir, I beg. I'll have the door opened."

"Oh, you will?"

"Yes."

"Then no more palaver, or I'll see tew it myself, anyhow."

"Restrain your ferocity, my dear sir," said poor Mole.

"Don't 'My dear sir' me, darn you—or——"

"I cannot let you in just yet."

"Why, you—you ring-tailed roarer!"

"Oh! my!"

"You—you all-fired snorter!"

"How dreadful to be called such awful names."

"Open the door."

"I can't sir, I assure you. Mrs. Mole is dressing."

"What's that to do with me? Put Mother Mole into bed while we carve away at each other."

"What a sanguinary villain," gasped Mole.

"And if your old woman can't stand fire, let her plug up her ears with cotton wool while we blaze away. She can cover over her head, if she don't like to see your ruby spilt; but, damme! I'll make you dance."

It was piteous indeed to behold poor Mr. Mole.

He was as pale as death; the colour had fled from his lips, which were growing blue.

"Remember, sir, I am a married man," cried Mole.

"Sarve you right, for making a darned fool of yourself," shouted the fire-eater.

Young Jack was laughing inwardly.

"I'll bust it open!" exclaimed the wrathful Brick outside.

A mighty thump, that threatened to shiver the panels, wound up this fierce speech.

Mr. Mole had grown desperate by this time.

So he stepped up to the door, and stilled the chattering of his teeth by a tremendous effort.

"If you will only curb your violence," he said, in his most dignified manner, "and make known your desires, I will endeavour to meet them."

"I'll 'desires' you," retorted Brick through the keyhole.

"What do you want?"

"To slice your darned liver."

Mole shivered.

"If you have been offended, sir——" he began.

"Offended? Outraged, you mealy-faced cuss!"

"I am ready to make an ample apology."

"Won't have it."

"What more can a gentleman do?" asked poor Mole, in despair.

"Come out and draw iron," yelled Solomon Brick; "come out and get cat-awampously chawed up."

"Chawed up; dear, dear, whatever is that? Is it worse than being carved up?"

"Bust, spifflicated, and I'll be your buster, your spifflicater; come out."

"Dear, dear me, how violent. What a fury."

"If you've got the pluck of a maiding gal, come out and get goss."

"Whatever is a maiding gal?" exclaimed Mr. Mole, fairly puzzled.

"He wants you to fight him, sir. Had you not better have it over at once?"

"Ugh! A duel?"

"Of course."

"Put him off, then."

"Well, sir?"

"Mr. Mole says," replied young Jack at the door, that he'll be very glad to meet you——"

"No, no!"

"If you'll name your time and weapons."

"No, no, no!" cried Mr. Mole, in an agonised whisper.

"Time now," retorted the fierce Solomon Brick through the keyhole; "nothing like the present. Weapons, anything he likes from toothpicks to blunderbusses, popguns to forty-eight pounders, and he may consider me there; that's so."

"I'll never fight, Jack," groaned Isaac Mole, now thoroughly lost to a proper sense of his dignity before his pupil.

"You must, sir."

"Wall, is he ready? Shall I send someone to order his coffin? I don't mind paying for it."

"Well, sir, Mr. Mole says that he is not ready for his coffin, and he couldn't fight now as he's too busy," answered young Jack, "and he's got a bad toothache, and he don't feel well; but he'll be glad to accommodate you——"

"Say next Tuesday week," suggested Mr. Mole.

"To-morrow," said young Jack.

"To-morrow, then," answered Mr. Brick. "What time?"

"Six."

"In the morning?"

"Yes."

"Don't be so rash," said Mr. Mole, in a whisper; "say evening."

"Evening," repeated young Jack aloud.

"Very good; I'll be here and conduct you to a place where we can chop away like fun for an hour or two, and say!"

"Yes, sir."

"I'll hev a barrer with me to wheel off what is left of Mole; d'ye hear?"

And then they heard the sounds of Mr. Solomon Brick's retreating footsteps.

Isaac Mole drew a long breath of relief at this.

"Thank goodness that that man-monster has left," said he. "By six to-morrow evening I hope to be a long way on the road to Cuba."

Mr. Mole hurried the preparations for their departure in a feverish manner, and by noon next day the whole of the Harkaway party, Jefferson, Magog Brand, Harry Girdwood, and the two English detectives, were on their way to Mr. Mole's tea plantation in the Celestial Empire, *viâ* that hotbed of revolution—the Island of Cuba.

CHAPTER XVII.

NEMESIS ON BOARD—JACK AT HIS OLD TRICKS—MOLE-HUNTING.

"Her bowsprit points to Cuba,
The coast lies far behind,"

sang Mr. Mole, who was quite elated at the idea of being once more afloat, and having escaped the fire-eating brick.

"This reminds me, Jack, of my strange adventures with a slaver, that I fell in with once when I was on my travels."

"Dear me, sir!" exclaimed his pupil, "a slaver?"

"Yes, Jack."

"Did you ever trade in slaves?"

"I'm afraid I did."

"You were a desperate character then, sir!"

"I think I was, Jack," answered Mr. Mole; "in fact, my dear boy, I am afraid that I was a deuce of a fire-eater when young."

"How strange. You have changed now, sir."

"It is strange."

"Yes, sir," said young Jack, reflectively. "It is by the same rule, I suppose, that the prettiest babies grow up the ugliest men and women, at times."

"And *vice versâ*," added his tutor, with a modest cough. "I have heard my parents remark that I was far from comely in my infancy."

"Which accounts for your splendid appearance now, sir."

"Precisely. I was too fiery in my youth, Jack, far too fiery, and I was given to resent every offence in a way that a man really ought not to. I was a dare-devil. you see, a high-spirited, dashing young blade, Jack, in fact, a species of—of——"

"Solomon Brick," suggested his pupil.

"Not quite so misguided, I might almost say so mad, but I was almost as desperate if I had any real offence to resent."

"He was very alarming, sir."

"He was very absurd, Jack, if you mean that," he replied.

"He frightened you dreadfully, sir."

"Frightened me?" echoed Mr. Mole. "Don't talk nonsense, Jack."

"Do you mean that you were not frightened, sir?"

"Of course not, Jack; the fact is, as I was about leaving America, I did not wish to have the poor fellow's blood on my hands."

"Then you were not frightened?" asked Jack.

"No, Jack, and I am glad I did not chastise that misguided man for his rudeness, though it quite upset me."

"I thought once you had got the captain aboard, sir."

"The captain aboard?" iterated Mr. Mole. "What captain?"

"Captain Funk," answered young Jack, demurely.

And without waiting to watch the effect of his speech upon his tutor, young Jack turned upon his heel, and strode aft in search of Dick Harvey.

Dick was engaged in a chat with Jack Harkaway, senior.

"I say, Mr. Harvey," said young Jack, "we shall have to bring Mr. Solomon Brick to the fore again."

Harvey grinned.

"What for, Jack?"

"Oh, he's going it wildly."

"Mr. Mole?"

"Yes."

"Bragging?"

"Worse than ever."

"Very well, then, we'll physic him," said Dick Harvey.

So they let Harkaway into the secret, and they got up a notable scheme between them; for young Jack's father had never got over his old predilection for a practical joke of any kind, and a spree with Isaac Mole—so long as it was not carried too far—was of all things in the world just to his taste.

This just helped them to carry out their joke.

Harkaway loved fun now as much as ever, and into this present scheme he entered heart and soul.

* * * * *

"Mr. Mole," said Jack Harkaway, senior, a little later on, "is there any foundation for what the captain of this ship has been telling me?"

"If I only knew, my dear Harkaway," said Mr. Mole, with a very supercilious smile, "what Captain Disher had been telling you, I might be able to hazard a reply."

"You shall know at once, sir," replied Harkaway. "It relates to a gentleman you offended—a Mr. Solomon Brick."

Mr. Mole started

"Has captain Disher been speaking to you of that insolent person?"

"Then there is some truth in it?"

"I don't know what you may understand by that, Harkaway. There was a person calling himself Solomon Brick—odious name—who presumed to be very insolent

to me, and whom I should certainly have punished, had our hurried departure——”

“That’s it, then. Good Heaven, my dear old friend.”

“Don’t excite yourself, Harkaway.”

“I do not—I do not, Mr. Mole, only I can’t say how glad I am that this man did not goad you on to rashness.”

“Ahem !”

“That your hands are free from the stain of blood.”

“True,” returned the tutor, pompously ; “he was very provoking, and, although I am not given to take offence too readily, I must say that I was sorely tempted to give him a lesson.”

“You were ?”

“Yes.”

“You don’t mean it,” said Harkaway, apparently quite staggered by the tutor’s display of courage.

“Indeed, I do.”

“And would you really like to meet him ?”

“Such,” replied Mr. Mole, complacently, “such is my dearest wish. In point of fact, once let me finish the business which I have now on hand, and I shall, without loss of time, make a point of seeking out Mr. Solomon Brick, and either make him eat his words and humbly apologise, or——”

“Or what ?”

“Or he shall account to me for his violent conduct with sword and pistol.”

And Mr. Mole, looking as fierce as a maggot, strode up and down *à la militaire*.

To look upon Isaac Mole just then, you would have thought him the most desperate duellist that the fighting world could produce.

Harkaway appeared to be shocked.

“Oh, Mr. Mole, Mr. Mole !” he said, with a long-drawn sigh.

“What, Jack ?”

“I am so sorry to see you betray such ferocity.”

“One cannot help one’s nature, Harkaway. You know I was always brave.”

“True, but still I had hopes of passing a time of tranquil and calm enjoyment on our voyage out.”

“And so we shall.”

"Not if you betray such bloodthirsty instincts."

Mr. Mole was in positive ecstasy at this.

Not only had he got out of a very difficult position with considerable skill, but he had very easily acquired a reputation for fierceness with the most sceptical of his friends.

"Do not fear for me, my dear Harkaway," he said.

"As fierce and warlike as I may be in presence of the enemy, I am a very lamb in the time of peace."

Harkaway shook his head doubtfully.

"There will be bloodshed yet on board, I fear."

"What do you mean?" asked Mr. Mole, as though he had not heard aright.

"If you insist on molesting this man."

"Don't be weak and silly, Harkaway! Once for all, you will find me calm and peaceably disposed enough here. Only once free from this job, I will get you to bear a message for me to this insolent rowdy."

"I?"

"Yes, you."

"I should feel flattered at being chosen for your second, sir," said Harkaway, "but the dread of any thing happening to you——"

"Mr. Mole winced.

It gave him a turn to think what might have happened to him had he not managed to put off that bloodthirsty Yankee, Solomon Brick.

At the same time he mentally vowed never to set foot in New York city again until he had heard of Mr. Solomon Brick's demise.

But a startler was in reserve for poor Isaac Mole.

"Mr. Mole," said Harkaway, in a funereal voice, "I can't refuse you."

"Of course not."

"No. My respect for you, my dear old friend, forbids that; but, oh! I cannot describe to you my anguish when I reflect in how short a time it may be my wretched lot to see you stretched at my feet."

"What!"

"Bathed in your own gore."

"Harkaway, don't talk such nonsense. Your words are more forcible than pleasant."

"Ah, you make light of it, sir," said Harkaway. "You

know not fear, but I—I—when I think that another hour may see you lifeless."

Mr. Mole pricked up his ears.

Another hour!

Surely there was some mistake.

"Are you aware, Harkaway, that it will be months before this voyage will be settled, and all the work in hand?"

"Yes; but I suppose you mean me to carry your message at once."

"At once! How? Whatever do you mean, Harkaway?"

"Is it possible, Mr. Mole, that you can be unaware of his presence on board?"

"Whose?"

"Why, whose but Mr. Solomon Brick's, that dreadful man, who is now thirsting for your blood!"

Had Mr. Mole suddenly sat down upon a needle, he could not have started more spasmodically. The colour forsook his cheek.

He held himself steady by the nearest projection, and stared wildly at Harkaway.

"Do you mean that he, Solomon Brick, is here, Harkaway?"

"Yes."

"On board?"

"Yes."

"Have you seen him?"

"No, but the captain is full of it. Mr. Brick has paid his fare to Cuba solely with the idea of following you."

"Gracious!"

"He has sworn to have your blood; in fact, your life."

"The villain!"

"And no doubt he'll keep his word, for Captain Disher tells me his skill with the bowie-knife is something marvellous, and that he is never satisfied until he cuts his enemy into mincemeat; while, as for shooting, he can do things that look more like conjuring tricks than pistol practice."

Mr. Mole shivered.

He hadn't a word to say for himself now.

It was so sudden—so awful.

Such a change from the calm, delightful feeling of satisfaction which he had experienced in having escaped his danger, that he was utterly dumfounded.

"Well, Mr. Mole," said Harkaway, "since I see you so resolved, I may as well go and carry your message."

He moved a step.

But Mr. Mole detained him.

"Stop a moment——"

"What is it?" cried Jack.

"Why," said Mr. Mole, grasping Jack's hand, "my dear Harkaway, I am thinking that at my time of life, perhaps it would be advisable to turn my quarrels over to a younger man, for instance, my dear old pupil. You may, if you like, take my place, and fight this dreadful man-eater for me."

"No," cried Harkaway, "I will not rob you of the honour of ridding the world of this horrid villain, and I had better lose no time, for if we're not sharp, the challenge will come from him, and since you are so fiercely resolved, let us take it out of him altogether."

"One moment, Harkaway," gasped the tutor.

"Yes, sir."

"This is so sudden, and so unexpected."

"But not disagreeable to you, I suppose?"

"Of course not—but——"

"All right, sir," said Harkaway, cheerfully, "we'll talk it over when I have settled the particulars. Meanwhile, let us be first with our message, or——"

"Mr. Mole," said one of the crew, stepping up at this moment.

"Yes."

"Mr. Solomon Brick wants to see you on urgent business that can't be put off; he seems to have a lot of powder and shot, and a sharp knife or two, sir, he says; and he's coming to you right away."

Mr. Mole gave a cry—a species of gasp; and hobbled away at a rate that rather astonished his friends.

In his hurry he tumbled head first down the steps, shut himself in his cabin, and did not appear for the next two days.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE ISLAND OF CUBA—STARTLING NEWS.

MR. MOLE became a regular amusement for the whole ship.

He called for food and drink to be placed outside his door day by day, being much too afraid to come on deck.

But when they neared the coast of Cuba, they had other matters to distract their attention, and the tutor got a rest.

A Spanish cruiser overhauled them, and a rigorous examination was made of their papers and cargo.

The reason of this harsh proceeding was patent to all.

The insurgents of Cuba got supplies of arms and ammunition from all quarters.

The authorities had their floating spies about in all directions, and sometimes they succeeded in bagging a delinquent—catching him in the act. And when they did, it went hard with him at last.

They issued proclamations threatening all blockade runners with death in the event of their capture red-handed.

Captain Disher remonstrated to the Spanish cruiser in language more plain than polite.

"We sail under a flag that won't stand much, *senor*," he said, pointing significantly to the stars and stripes floating about in the breeze, "so let me recommend that to your polite consideration before you go too far."

"I can accept the full responsibility for my actions," replied the Spanish commander, with gravity. "You are free to depart now, but I warn your passengers that anyone landing runs very considerable risks. These are serious times, and we can't well spend precious moments over matters of form and ceremony."

They learnt something more interesting than this.

More interesting, that is, to the Harkaways.

The Spanish cruiser had the day previously made an important capture.

A vessel carrying arms for the insurgents, together with other good contraband of war, had been taken.

A very important capture indeed it was considered.

Amongst the prisoners, they counted Captain Clemmans, one of the most serious and most successful blockade runners, and his crew, there was every reason to believe, was simply a body of recruits for the revolutionists.

"And what will be done with the men?" questioned Captain Disher, in Harkaway's hearing.

The Spanish officer smiled significantly at the question.

"What *has* been done with them, you mean, captain!"

"Well, has been done, then?"

"Shot."

"Never!"

"Such is the case," replied the officer, gravely; "and now judge if you are fortunate in having nothing in your cargo which calls forth any suspicions concerning you."

Later information confirmed what this officer had said.

A number of prisoners were taken, and after a hurried mockery of a trial, they were placed against a wall and shot down mercilessly.

Harkaway was not a little startled by what he heard, as you may suppose.

"Can you give me a list of names of the parties shot?"

"From the 'Independence'?" asked the officer.

"Yes."

"Here is the official list."

The Spaniard produced a list of names from his pocket, and handed it to Harkaway.

He hurriedly scanned them down.

"Richard Barkley, John Clemmans, Fritz Von Koppenhaagen, Juan Ostani, Robert Emmerson, Francis Warburton."

"Is it possible," said Harkaway, meditatively, "that this can be the end of the villains who have caused us so much trouble and bother?"

"Did you know any of the murdered men?" inquired the captain, who stood near Harkaway.

"Murdered men!" iterated the Spanish officer, indignantly. "They were men deserving of death."

"I knew several of them," replied Harkaway. "It is certain that they merited their fates. But can it really be

true that Toro, Hunston, and Emerson are amongst the slain?"

After some little conversation, the Spanish officer suggested that the best way of ascertaining whether the men executed were really those our hero had known would be to inquire of the consul, who would be able to furnish him with full descriptions.

So Jack Harkaway the elder and his friend Dick Harvey went ashore in a boat for the purpose of visiting the British consul.

They were challenged by the sentries as they landed.

But they were fortunately accompanied by the Spanish revenue officer, whose presence was a guarantee for them.

Once on shore, they were soon conducted to the British consulate.

Harkaway had no difficulty in making himself known.

"I am very pleased," said the consul, "to make your acquaintance, for I have many things to tell you."

"Indeed, sir," said Harkaway, in some surprise.

"It concerns your late agent."

"Don José?"

"Poor Don José! He was a personal friend of mine, and his death caused me sorrow and trouble in vainly endeavouring to unravel the mystery connected with his death."

"Mystery?"

"Yes."

"What mystery?"

"His continued praises of your father's great liberality excited the cupidity of an adventurer called—or calling himself—Juan Ostani."

"Then how come Don José to name Ostani as his successor?"

"It was your father who did that," said the consul.

Harkaway shook his head rather seriously.

"It is a forgery, then."

"Are you sure?"

"Certain, for I know positively that my father was always opposed to this Ostani."

"Then," said the consul, "I can see it all now. This supplies the only link wanting to complete the chain of evidence I have been fitting together. Don José, your father's agent, died in a way that convinced me there had

been foul play, and Ostani produced letters appointing him successor. From the first moment that I saw that man I was prejudiced against him. He speedily became woefully unpopular with everyone, and it began to be whispered about that he was concerned in the political intrigues which led to the civil war."

"Indeed!"

"It has since transpired that he was in the pay of both sides, and that he played false to both."

"The villain!"

"Presently it grew too hot for him here, and he one fine day disappeared from the scene, bearing off a considerable amount of property with which he had been entrusted."

"How is it that he did not get into trouble with your hot-headed islanders?"

"Why, in some measure his physical weakness protected him."

"How? Was he deformed or very aged?"

"Neither. He was a well-grown man, but he had only one arm."

Jack looked up.

"One arm?"

"Yes."

"That is a singular coincidence!" he said. "My greatest enemy is a one-armed man. Describe this Ostani."

"He was rather tall, sallow-faced, with a lowering brow and forbidding glance—an objectionable man, in fact."

"The very man!" exclaimed Jack Harkaway, jumping up.

The consul looked up in great surprise.

"Your Juan Ostani," continued Harkaway, "has been taken prisoner, and, as I have been given to understand, shot yesterday."

"Good Heaven!"

Harkaway continued—

"He was taken here with others on board a vessel carrying arms to the insurgents. Juan Ostani is an Englishman, I am sorry to say, and his real name is Hunston."

CHAPTER XIX.

"WHO GOES THERE?"—AN ADVENTURE AND AN ARREST.

THE consul rang, and a servant appeared.

"Can you give me the names of the crew and passengers of the 'Independence' who were shot?" he asked.

"Two men only were shot."

"But I heard that they were all condemned."

"It is true, sir, but they were mostly respited."

"Give me the names of the two who were shot."

"One was Joachim Hertz, the other was called Salviati."

"Stay while I write a letter to the governor of the prison. I wish to see one of the prisoners."

"The rest of them have been set at liberty."

"Never!"

"Pardon your excellency, it is the truth."

"Confound it!" ejaculated the consul. "Then a great scoundrel has been set loose again to prey upon society at large."

Further inquiries corroborated this statement.

Hunston had, with his own extraordinary luck, again escaped the most terrible danger he ever ran.

He had actually been taken red-handed by the outraged authorities, who did not scruple to take the lives of men who were comparatively innocent, and yet he had got off.

The only condition imposed upon him was that he should leave the island at once.

This he and his companions in infamy readily promised to do.

The consul rang again, and sent for a native clerk, to whom he gave some directions in Spanish and dismissed him.

Harkaway and Harvey only overheard the name of Ostani, and could understand no more.

"I have given my clerk instructions," explained the consul, "to write out two or three copies of an announcement concerning Ostani, or Hunston, as you call him—offering a reward for his capture."

"But he has been set at liberty."

"He was set free by the Spanish authorities over the other business. His presence was unknown to those he had injured during his residence at Havannah and other parts of the island. I shall place the notices in the way of people who I know have been deeply injured by Ostani, and believe me, if you will, they are sure to make such a hubbub that his escape from the island is next to an impossibility."

"And if he is caught?"

"Leave the rest to me," said the consul, nodding significantly.

Then they left with the intention of calling the next day.

They strolled towards the shore for the purpose of going on board again, and on their way dropped into a café.

Here they called for something, and sat down to refresh in a shady part of the place.

"What do you think of Cuba, Dick?" asked Harkaway.

"Lovely place."

"And the people?"

Dick replied with a shrug.

"Scarcely know."

"They are evidently a discontented, foolish lot," said Harkaway.

"Hush!"

"What's the matter?"

"We are being watched."

"By whom?"

"That evil-eyed, black-muzzled-looking fellow behind there."

"Do you think so?"

"I am sure of it."

"What can be their purpose in spying upon us?"

"Strangers are looked upon with suspicion in these troublesome times, and we are liable to be arrested for nothing, or next to nothing."

"They would never dare."

Dick laughed.

"You would soon see whether they dared or not. They would have no more compunction about tying

our arms behind us, putting us against a wall, and shooting us down, than they would of drowning a kitten. These dons are nothing if not bloodthirsty."

Now barely were these words uttered when a man glided from close behind Harkaway.

He had not missed a word.

The shrubs had concealed him from view, and he had contrived to play the spy there with a vengeance.

Harkaway and Dick rose to stretch their legs a bit, and strolled out of the garden.

"Now, barely were their backs turned when the two men who were watching them made signs of significance to each other, and followed closely upon their heels.

* * * * *

"Do you know, Jack," said Harvey, "what I should like to do?"

"I don't know," responded Harkaway, with a yawn, "and I am far too tired, dear boy, to exert my power of divination."

"I should like to drive round the island in an open carriage."

Harkaway burst into a loud fit of laughter at this.

"Oh, Dick, Dick," he said, "I always knew that you were not a great geographer."

"Well," said Dick, humbly, "I can't really say that I am."

"But hang me if I ever thought to hear any one speak of 'driving round' the island of Cuba, as if it were another Jersey, Guernsey, or the Isle of Wight."

"Well, no, Jack; but what is the extent of Cuba?"

"Why, rather more than the entire length of England and Scotland, taken from the most southern part of England to the northernmost point of Scotland."

They soon strolled out of the town and enjoyed the country for a time.

They passed by whole groves of orange trees, laden with luscious fruit.

"It is getting late enough for us to return," suggested Harkaway, pausing and turning.

"True; we have some distance to go," said Harvey.

They turned and walked briskly on until they neared the town when they were suddenly accosted by a fierce-

looking sentry, who was on guard at one of the outposts.

He challenged them in Spanish, of which they understood not a single word, and Harkaway replied in English.

“*Habla Espanol ?*”

“No.”

“He is challenging us,” remarked Harvey; “friends.”

“*Amigos*,” said Harkaway, “and there goes all my Spanish.”

“Which may, or may not be correct,” added Harvey, laughing.

“*Americanos ?*” demanded the sentry.

Harkaway shook his head.

“Inglese.”

“Bravo!” said Harvey, laughing, “you are getting quite a don at it.”

The sentry evidently did not understand what was said, for he took the laughter in bad part, and growled out something in his own tongue, whereupon they looked blankly at each other.

“What does he want?”

“Can’t make head nor tail of it, for my part,” said Harvey.

“Let us go, then.”

They attempted to move by, but the sentry brought his bayonet to the charge.

“He looks like mischief,” said Harkaway.

“He means it.”

“Come on.”

Harkaway was carrying a stick, so with a flourish he knocked up the bayonet and pushed on.

But the sentry quickly recovered himself, dropped back two paces, and brought his bayonet again to the charge, using some very hard-sounding words, as he did so, in his native tongue.

“Hokey pokey rickeraboo,” said Harvey, mimicking the soldier’s tone and manner.

The sentry grew furious, and he made a lunge at Harvey, which Harkaway parried dexterously.

“Sword and target against bayonet,” said Harvey.

“I haven’t altogether forgotten the old practice,” laughed Harkaway.

Now, had they contented themselves with parrying this warrior's thrust, it might not have gone any further, but to be laughed at into the bargain was too much for the dignity of one of the most pompous of a people proverbially possessed of more pride than pence.

The soldier swore desperately ; at least, so they judged, for of course they could not understand a word he uttered, and again recovering his rifle, he suddenly cocked it and covered Harkaway.

This was a startler.

What was to be done ?

"Shall we show fight ?" demanded Harkaway.

"No ; discretion is the better part of valour," answered his companion ; "drop it."

"What ?"

"The game, and your stick too."

Harkaway let fall his stick, and made the sentry an extravagant sign of submission.

It was clear that they were laughing at him.

However, he grounded his rifle, and the next minute a guard of four men, commanded by a sergeant, marched up.

A hurried conversation ensued between the sentry and the sergeant, in which the only words that they could distinguish were "Inglese" and "passports."

"Does anyone here speak English?" asked Harkaway.

"I do, a little," said the sergeant.

This was a relief.

"What does our vigilant friend want with us, captain ?" asked Harvey.

The sergeant smiled,

The mistake in his grade was not displeasing.

"He wants your passports."

"Then why in the name of all the furies couldn't he ask for them ?"

"He says he did."

"Not he."

"He is a humbug," said Harkaway.

"Do you understand the meaning of that, captain ?"

"Yes."

"Tell him, then."

"I cannot blame my man for being vigilant."

"True."

"But he rather overdid it," said Harvey, "and he wasn't polite."

The sergeant smiled.

"Give me your passports, and if they are correct, you can pass on in peace."

"Passports?"

"Yes."

"We don't carry any."

"What, no passports?"

"No."

"That is, to say the least, imprudent in such times as these; I must trouble you to fall in and come with us."

"Where?"

"To the guard house."

"What for?"

"Those are our orders."

The two Englishmen began to look glum.

"What shall we do, Jack?" said Harvey, in a whisper, "fight or go?"

"Fighting for preference," returned Harkaway, in the same tone; "though I doubt if that would be the most prudent course."

"Perhaps not."

"Go, then?"

"Yes; it can't be long to get through the formalities."

"I suppose not."

"Now then, sir," said the sergeant, "fall in—march."

And so it fell out that Jack Harkaway and his friend Dick Harvey passed the night in the guardhouse.

CHAPTER XX.

YOUNG JACK ASHORE—A CUBAN PRISON.

You may imagine their sensations on board.

Not a wink of sleep did anyone of their party get that night, and as soon as it was fairly daylight, young Jack sought his mother's cabin.

"Dad did not come back last night?" he said.

"No."

"Do you think, mamma, that anything could have happened to them?"

"Scarcely."

But the look of anxiety on her face belied her words.

She was pale, and young Jack could perceive plainly enough the traces of tears upon her cheeks.

"I can see you are uneasy, mamma."

"No, no, Jack."

"You can't tell me," insisted her son, "but you are mistaken. Tears upon my father's account are thrown away. He knows how to take care of himself."

"Of course."

"Don't say of course, as if it is meant only to satisfy me and to leave you just as uneasy as before," said young Jack. "My father," he added proudly, "is a match for a good many men in courage, in strength, or in wit—and with Uncle Dick (as he called Harvey occasionally) I would undertake to say they are fit to meet the most formidable enemies."

"Then you think that they have met enemies?"

He paused.

"I don't know; but I will go in quest of father and Harvey."

Having heard his father speak of the consul, young Jack thought that he could not do better than go there himself.

The consul was fortunately an early man, so when young Jack sent up his name, he was shown in at once.

"Mr. John Harkaway!" he said, as young Jack entered; "why, I thought that——"

"Jack Harkaway, sir—not John," said young Jack; "I am the son of Mr. Harkaway, you know."

"Your face and voice proclaim that."

"I come to ask news of my father."

The consul opened his eyes wide at this.

"News?"

"Yes, sir."

"What news?"

"Is it possible you don't know, sir?"

"Know what?"

"That my father has not been back on board."

"Not all night?"

"No."

"This is very strange."

"It is, very—and it has made us very uncomfortable."

"No doubt. But these are ticklish times to live in," said the consul, "and perhaps they have been arrested on suspicion by the military."

"For what?"

"The insurgents get supplies in a way that baffles them altogether."

"But they cannot suspect my father in this?"

"They suspect anybody."

"Supposing he should be arrested, where would he be taken?"

"They would be taken to one of the prisons. However, we will waste no more time, young gentleman, but just make our round, without waiting until they can come to any further harm."

They started together.

On calling at the first prison, the consul contrived to get the information he required respecting Harkaway and Harvey.

They were not locked up there, but he found out where they were.

And when they were found, it was no trifling cause for alarm to discover they were treated as the regular insurgent prisoners.

The consul applied for permission to visit them, but this was denied him.

Now, the consul happened to know the magistrate very well, so he lost no time in seeing him.

"I remember these two people," he said to the consul; "they are desperate fellows, I am told. One of them would have used violence to the sentry on duty."

"Indeed?"

"Yes; but fortunately they will have an opportunity of giving an account of themselves to me within a week."

"A week?"

"Yes."

"And then?" asked the consul.

"Yes, sir," added young Jack, eagerly, "what then?"

"If their innocence is clear to me, they will be set at liberty."

"But supposing——"

The poor boy began in faltering tones, but could not proceed.

To anticipate anything but a favorable result was heartbreaking.

"I know what you would say," interrupted the alcade. "If there should be any doubt, why, then they will have an opportunity of clearing themselves before a legal tribunal, for I never pass a capital sentence myself."

Young Jack turned pale.

The remotest possibility of such a contingency filled him with dread.

"You do not think, sir, that there is any danger of my father and his friend not clearing themselves?"

"I can't possibly say," he replied, with a piercing glance at Jack.

The alcade then made out and signed the order for their admission to see the prisoners, and they left the place.

They walked on in silence.

The consul feared that the alcade might not dare to set the English prisoners free.

In a very short time they reached the prison.

It was a tall, frowning fortress, built upon the rocks fronting the sea, which washed the base of the building.

The entrance was through a huge iron door, that "swung sullenly ajar," and struck a chill to young Jack.

"My poor dad! poor Mr. Harvey!" he said. "They must indeed be wretched here."

The door swung back.

They stepped forward just as a noisy burst of laughter rang out, and there they saw the two prisoners.

They were playing at cards on a rough wooden bench and yelling with laughter at something that Harvey had just then said.

Beside them, upon the table, were cigars and wine.

CHAPTER XXI.

PRISON BREAKING—THREE TO THE RESCUE.

"JACK!"

"Dad!"

Father and son embraced.

Dick and the consul shook hands.

"Well, sir," said Harkaway, "these are pretty diggings to put two gentlemen in."

"I can't compliment your Spanish friends," added Harvey, laughing, "upon their hospitality to strangers."

"You don't appear to be very sad over it," said the consul.

"Not I. But have you brought the order for our release?"

"No."

"At any rate, we have to thank you for attending. I suppose you did not get my message last night?"

"I have had no message from you at all."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes."

"That is strange. I sent you word as soon as we came here last night."

"My dear Mr. Harkaway," said the consul, gravely, "allow me to tell you everything is done irregularly now, or not at all."

"Well, I know that our coming here was precious irregular," said Harvey.

"And our getting out ought perhaps to be in keeping."

The consul seized upon this chance shot at once.

"That's it, as irregular as you please, only get out as quickly as possible."

Harvey and Jack looked through the barred window.

The sea flowed beneath, but there was a drop of thirty feet to reach it.

The consul looked down into the water and talked to

himself thoughtfully, in a way that was meant for the prisoners to hear.

"It is a long way down ; it would want a bold man and a strong swimmer to tackle that leap."

"I have dived from as great a height before now," said Harkaway.

"Have you ?"

"Indeed, I have."

"And you, Mr. Harvey ?"

"I shouldn't think much of it," replied the light-hearted Dick ; "if there was a boat there or within half a mile or so, I would precious soon show them a clean pair of heels here."

"And would you recommend——" began Harkaway.

"I recommend nothing," answered the consul, warily ; "it is for you to help yourselves."

Harkaway called young Jack to his side, and then gave him some hurried directions in a low but expressive voice, while the consul discreetly remained out of hearing.

"At dusk, Jack," said Harkaway, "you understand ?"

"Yes."

"Don't leave it till dark, for fear of mistaking the direction."

"Never fear me."

"Have only one man with you, for this is desperate work."

"Have materials on you for getting a light, or still better carry a lantern ; keep it covered over until you know we are off."

"How shall I know ?"

"By a signal."

"What is it to be ?"

"Let us wave our light three times at the window just before we leap."

"I understand," said young Jack, eagerly.

"God bless you, my boy ! Keep a firm heart, and you will bring us off safely."

"Now, Master Harkaway !" said the consul.

"Time to go, sir ?"

"Yes, if you have nothing more to say to your father."

"I am ready, sir."

And then, with a significant nod and glance, young Jack and the consul took their departure.

Towards sundown young Jack begged permission to go ashore in a boat.

"You can, Master Jack," said the captain, "with pleasure, if you are going to fetch Mr. Harkaway."

"I am going for that purpose, captain."

The skipper gave him permission also to take one of the crew with him.

Young Jack went to select a likely man, and going aft, he met Harry Girdwood, talking with a sailor whose face was certainly familiar to him.

The sailor evidently knew young Jack, for he pulled his forelock at him in salute.

"How's Nero by this time, your honour?"

Young Jack recollected him at once then.

It was Ben Hawser.

You will remember that Ben Hawser was the original owner of the big monkey, Nero.

"What, Ben!" said Jack. "What cheer, my hearty?"

"Your honour didn't obsarve poor Ben aboard. But I seen your honour often."

"Then you must have been too proud to speak to an old friend, Ben."

This appeared to tickle the old tar immensely.

And as they were talking, it occurred to young Jack that Ben Hawser would be the very man to row him up to the prison where his father was confined.

"I am going ashore, Ben," said young Jack, "and I want someone to row me."

"I'm the man."

"It is a matter of some danger," said young Jack.

"Blow danger," said Ben Hawser, heartily. "I'll jest get the skipper's permission."

"No need for that; I have got it already."

"That's hearty."

"I'm with you too," said Harry Girdwood.

"Very good, Harry. I had orders to have only one man with me, but there can be no harm in your going."

"I should think not."

They got a lantern and matches, and prepared to muffle their oars when they should be a mile out from the ship.

Then they got a couple of muskets, a cutlass, and a brace of revolvers.

Jack thought it best to be prepared for all emergencies, for there must be no mistake in this work.

They were soon under way, and pulling at a good rate towards the prison in which Harkaway and Harvey were confined.

"Now," cried young Jack, "I'll tell you both where we are going. Do you see that building over there?"

"Yes."

"My father and Mr. Harvey are in prison there."

"Prison!" cried Ben Hawser. "Avast there."

"They are, Ben, and they are in great danger."

"Of what?"

"Their lives."

"What have they done?" asked Harry Girdwood.

"Nothing."

"Then how came these lubberly dons to——"

"They don't care much whether it is right or wrong," answered young Jack, anticipating his question. "Might is right, nowadays, here, so we must get my poor dad and uncle out of prison before the night is over."

"We will!"

"We will!" said Ben Hawser, "or I'm the biggest land-lubber that ever turned a quid."

It was dark by now.

They muffled their oars in silence, for they were within three-quarters of a mile of shore, and the greatest precaution was necessary.

"Now for the lantern."

It was lighted and held aloft by Harry Girdwood.

And in the pitch darkness of night, they shipped their oars and lay to, watching in breathless anxiety for the signal from the prison window.

The fortress looked dark and frowning.

Not a glimmer of light could be seen at any part of it. Presently there was a roll of drums.

"Hark," cried young Jack, "what can that mean? perhaps danger to my father."

Then all was still.

The silence grew oppressive, and poor young Jack began, in spite of himself, to be filled with uneasiness.

"I hope there is nothing amiss."

"Keep up your pecker and your patience, Master Harkaway," said Ben Hawser; "it'll all be right yet."

"I hope so."

"I'm sure of it."

They waited probably for about half an hour.

And then their patience was rewarded.

A light was seen at the window.

"There it goes," they exclaimed all three together.

"Answer!" cried young Jack.

"How?"

"With the light, quick."

So saying he snatched it from Harry Girdwood, and waved the lantern backwards and forwards three times.

The latter was waved at the window again thrice.

"Hurrah!" said Ben, shouting in a whisper—rather a difficult thing to do, by the way—"they see us. Look, they are giving the countersign."

"I see."

"In an hour, please God, we'll have them safe aboard," said young Jack.

But their work was not yet over.

Danger and death were near Harkaway and Dick Harvey.

CHAPTER XXII.

A LEAP FOR LIFE AND A FLYING SHOT.

HARKAWAY and his friend Dick Harvey had been awaiting nightfall in considerable anxiety.

The former's only fear was that young Jack would be over eager to get off, and not curb his impatience until it would be safe to venture afloat near the prison.

Harvey watched at the window while Harkaway listened at the door.

"Will he never come?" said Harkaway, impatiently.

"There is something wrong, I fear."

"I fear it is so."

"It must be."

But even as they spoke, there was a faint glimmering of light seen upon the water.

"See there!" cried Harkaway.

"Where?"

"Look, look out at sea—that speck dancing there upon the waves."

"I see, I see!" said Harvey; "it grows larger—they signal us. Huzzah!"

"Hush! be cautious."

"Here," cried Harvey, "you take the lantern and wave it three times as we agreed."

This was done; then they waited and watched in the most intense anxiety for a few minutes.

"Look, they answer it!"

The light was waved from the boat out at sea.

Harvey gave the countersign.

"Now for it."

Harkaway left the door.

His heart was beating quickly as the moment drew near.

He mounted on a chair as Harvey clambered to the window sill.

"Now for it," said Harvey.

"Wait one moment! Lower yourself a little way at least, and then drop."

"No, no! better jump the whole way."

"It is a fearful leap, Dick."

"Right, old boy, but it is for life. I must jump out into deep water; if I drop straight down, I may fall on the rocks."

"True, Jack; now, then, a bold leap and off."

"Hark!"

"What was that?"

A roll of drums!

A heavy tread of soldiers.

It was unusual—it was an alarming sound, and they began to look blank.

"They have discovered something," said Harvey.

"I fear so," cried Jack; "if we are discovered our death is certain."

"What shall we do?"

Harkaway paused a moment to consider.

"Better make a dash for it, and chance a leap for life, old boy."

"Good!"

Harvey turned to the window, and prepared for the jump.

He held out his hand behind him, and Harkaway seized it eagerly—a silent pressure from the true and old friends told all they had to say to each other.

They were brave men, but the peril before them was deadly, and it was just possible that they might never look upon each other more in this world.

The grasp was full of meaning to those two bold hearts.

“Now for it!”

Dick Harvey planted his feet firmly upon the ledge, and then he made a desperate leap into the dark waters.

At the self-same moment a rifle was fired under the window.

Harkaway's heart beat quick with dread for his old friend.

* * * * *

Harkaway clambered up eagerly.

He looked down, down into the black sullen water.

But he heard no splash.

“Bang!”

Again a loud report from a rifle.

He saw no signs of Dick.

He had not yet risen to the surface.

He waited and watched until his eyes ached with the intensity of their gaze.

No signs of Dick.

It seemed an age.

“Oh, Dick! oh, Dick!” cried Harkaway, lifting his voice in agony, “what shall I do if you are gone, killed by these bloodhounds, brave heart? My best and noblest friend, where shall I replace your loss?”

Craning over, straining his eyes until it seemed as though they would burst from their sockets.

And presently the reward for his patience came.

He saw a figure dashing through the water.

By degrees he could detect the outline of a human form battling boldly with the waves.

“Bravo, Dick! bravo, old man!” cried Harkaway, excitedly.

But then, as the swimmer progressed rapidly, his anxiety grew less.

He felt sure that Dick was safe.

And turning from the window for a moment, he ran to

the door of the cell to listen, for he fancied that he heard the tramp of the gaoler in the stone-paved passage.

"Yes ; he's coming !"

This was unlucky.

"What was to be done ?"

Before he could reflect upon this the door was unbarred and thrown open.

The gaoler entered.

"The sentry says it is from here," he began as he came in, "but he must be as mad as an Englishman to say so—hullo !"

Harkaway had squatted down again upon a bench in the middle of the cell, and was endeavoring to look as innocent and as unconcerned as possible.

"Hullo !"

Harkaway nodded with a cheerful air.

"Where is the other ?"

"Which other ?"

"Your friend and fellow-prisoner," was the reply.

"I have neither ; don't you see I'm alone."

The man now began to perceive that he was being fooled, so he moved angrily towards the door.

Harkaway slipped sharply after him, and blocked up the doorway.

"Stand aside," said the gaoler, who somehow did not like the look of the prisoner.

Harkaway made no reply, but dropping upon the man with sudden fierceness, he toppled him over and bore him to the ground.

"If you say half a word," hissed the prisoner in the gaoler's ear, "I'll put an end to you."

The man was silent.

His face showed what he felt, and this was any thing but pleasant.

"Lay there," said Harkaway, getting up. "Keep quiet, and you'll not be hurt. Breathe but a word, and——"

He said no more, but his looks told their own tale.

Harkaway jumped up to the window and looked out.

It had all taken place in a moment, and the boat was still apparently in the same spot.

The light was still shining at the boat's head, but there were no signs of the swimmer.

"He is safe on board by now," said Harkaway.

Barely were the words uttered when he had to turn round to see what was taking place in the cell.

The gaoler, being relieved from the prisoner's unpleasant attentions, had crawled on his stomach to the door and given the alarm.

Armed men ran in, and in less time than it takes to write the word, Jack Harkaway was covered by no less than five rifles.

"Yield!" cried the gaoler.

"Pickles!" returned Harkaway.

And then, before they could have an idea of his intention, he waved his hands and leaped out of the window.

Stupefied for a moment, the men sprang forward to the window, and one of them stared down into the pitchy darkness.

"There he goes," cried the soldier.

Several others sprang up.

They crowded to the window.

Muskets were pointed—hurried sights were taken at the something moving, which they took to be the prisoner, and a sharp succession of reports followed.

And then they watched anxiously until the smoke cleared away, to see if their aim had been as deadly as they had hoped.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE VASTY DEEP!—A MEETING IN MID-OCEAN.

JACK HARKAWAY, the elder, went down, down, down, until his breath was almost cut by the terrible flight through the air.

At length—ah, it seemed a terrible time—he struck the water. He went below, and his downward flight was checked.

He sailed along in semi-unconsciousness for awhile, and then, as the cool water revived him, he struck upwards.

He shook the water from his eyes and face, and looked about him.

Yes, there was the light still.

He struck out for it, and after swimming awhile, he shouted out with all his might and main, and then turned over on his back and floated with long and vigorous strokes towards it.

But while he was floating thus, his eyes were fixed upon the window of the prison from which he had just leapt, and suddenly he saw there that he was the object of most unpleasant attentions upon the part of the authorities.

There was a flash—a report—and a rifle bullet struck the water close by Jack Harkaway's head.

“That's enough for me,” said Harkaway.

And down he went under water.

Now, as he breasted the surface again, he ran foul of some dark object that thrilled him with fear.

So quick is thought, that he went through a whole drama of horrors in his fancy—all, as it were, in a flash.

He thought it was a shark.

The monster of the deep would have had him in his ghastly maw in a moment, and then good-bye to all.

Good-bye to the world ; to his hopes and fears ; to his love, and fancies generally—he would never be able to look again upon his Emily or his boy.

Good-bye to——

Hullo !

Why, it was not a shark ; it was about as different from a shark, in point of fact, as any thing could well be.

It was a man, and, like Harkaway, a fugitive.

He, too, was swimming towards that light on the sea.

Yes, swimming for dear life.

“Help ! oh, help me !” gasped the swimmer.

“I've scarce strength to save myself,” replied Harkaway, faintly.

“I sink !” faltered the other. “I sink ! I die ! Oh, help !”

Harkaway was sorely distressed.

Yet he was not the man to leave a fellow-creature in peril, and so, at the risk of his own life, he turned to lend a hand to the sinking man.

Just then there was another flash at the fortress window.

Then a report.

And then a ball whizzed past Harkaway, and struck the unfortunate man beside him in the water.

"Oh, mercy!" cried the unfortunate wretch.

He threw up his arms in his agony, and sank.

Down, down, he dropped, like a lead end of a line, and down went Harkaway after him.

What ensued was the work of a minute.

To help an unfortunate fellow-creature was with Jack Harkaway a sort of instinct.

Had he been able to reason it, he would surely never have ventured upon such rashness; for he was already so much exhausted himself that his preservation hung, as it were, upon a mere thread.

As it was, he seized the wounded and drowning man by the hair, and made a vigorous stroke upwards.

A little more, and it would have been too late.

His strength, his senses were fast leaving him.

"Hold up!" gasped Harkaway. "Now strike out—both arms—both, I say!"

A voice that was familiar then rang in his ears in welcome words of encouragement.

"Keep up!"

"That's right!"

"One more!"

"Bravo!"

"Boldly done, my hearty; never saw a betterer, as sure as my cognomen's Hawser."

And as the words were uttered, a pair of strong hands grasped the exhausted Harkaway by the hair, and he was unceremoniously lifted out of the water and dragged into the boat.

The man that Harkaway had saved was likewise cared for.

And then the oars were unshipped, and while two of the party bestowed every care upon the half-drowned men, the others rowed desperately out of musket range of the fortress.

And as they rowed away in silence, the moon burst through the inky clouds and shed a silvery ray across the boat.

It fell across the face of the unfortunate stranger, upon whom the boat's crew—including Harkaway, who had

recovered from his exhaustion in some degree—were exerting their best cares to bring him round.

The aim of the soldier who had fired from the fortress window had been too true.

The ball had struck the water first, and so was partly spent before touching the unfortunate man, otherwise nothing could have saved him.

As it was, it had inflicted an ugly wound upon his head, from which the blood gushed, saturating his face, and covering it in a mask of gore.

They washed it off as tenderly as possible, and staunched the wound with a soaked handkerchief.

And then, as the silver moonlight fell upon that pallid, ghastly face, young Jack recognised the features.

He gave a cry of horror.

“Father, father, look !”

“Where? What?”

“Don’t you remember him now, father? Look !”

The elder Harkaway glanced again at the newly-rescued man, and a cry of amazement, disgust, wonder, disappointment, burst from him.

“Merciful Heaven! It’s Hunston !”

CHAPTER XXIV.

HUNSTON !

THE notices which the British consul caused to be written out by his clerk and posted about caused great excitement.

The notices had been posted in the quarters where Señor Ostani, otherwise Hunston, had been well known.

In less than an hour there were many persons on the hunt after Ostani.

Information was zealously sought after concerning the movements of the released prisoners, and some reliable particulars were gleaned. They had not left the island.

No sooner was this known than a regular plan was organised for their pursuit.

The coast was guarded by a number of those whom the English scoundrel had victimised.

Every boat was keenly scrutinised.

Now, while the excitement which this created was at its height, two men, greatly interested in the matter, stood reading the proclamation, which was posted up at the consulate door.

One of these was a one-armed man.

Next him stood a tall fellow, of herculean build, whose fine proportions were shown off to great advantage by a long riding cloak.

It made his figure look colossal.

"Diavolo!" exclaimed the latter under his breath.

"This is a serious job, Hunst——"

"No names!" interrupted his companion, affrightedly.

"We are observed."

"Where?"

"Behind there."

Surely enough, too, there was a man watching them with great interest.

They exchanged a few hurried whispers, and sauntered off.

As soon as they were free from the attentions of the person who had excited their suspicions, Hunston spoke to his companion—who was none other than the ex-brigand Toro.

It will be remembered that he had been strangely carried off after his desperate fight with Jefferson.

"Lend me your cloak; it will hide my deformity. The loss of an arm fixes my identity to the casual observer."

The cloak was exchanged.

"Now, what is your advice?" asked Hunston.

"I think it would be safer to remain in the town till nightfall, and then have a boat sent ashore for you."

"You're right," returned Hunston, "but great care must be observed."

"It must."

"The boat had better be sent ashore out of the town."

"When?"

"Let me see."

They thought it over for a while, and then Toro had a suggestion to offer.

"You know where the fortress is situated?"

"Well?"

"They shall pull ashore there and fetch you."

"Good."

"True."

And so they parted.

It was agreed that a rocket should be fired from the ship before the boat left.

Hunston strolled about to kill time before nightfall, and in his rambles he came to a public garden where music and dancing were going forward.

On entering, he had resolved merely to call for some refreshments, and to take it in a remote corner, so as to avoid all accidents.

But this was not to be.

Hunston was recognised almost immediately.

He saw it, and slipping out, made off at full speed.

Then, with loud outcries, the whole of the company fled after him and gave chase.

The hunt, however, such as it was, was but short-lived.

No signs of the fugitive could they discover.

Thanks to his knowledge of the locality, he managed very soon to get out of danger.

Out of danger for the present, at least.

But it was by no means over.

He had to reach the coast by a circuitous route, so as to be in readiness for the signal from the ship.

And then, for two long, weary hours, he prowled about in anxious expectation, waiting and watching, and full of weariness,

Would they never come?

Would they never send up that signal rocket? It seemed so.

* * * * *

"There it goes!"

From that moment the wretched man was not alone.

Two of his Cuban foes glided after him as he moved along towards the sea-shore, for they had seen the rocket which Hunston's comrades had sent up, as the signal agreed upon for the departure of the boat, and this had excited their attention.

They had not proceeded far when they recognised in the mysterious man in the cloak the traitorous Ostani, upon whose head, so to speak, a price was set.

"Caramba!" murmured one to the other in an undertone; "it is Ostani himself."

"After him, then, and let us make sure of him."

"Good."

They soon caught up with him, and then, with a hand on each shoulder, they brought him up to a standstill.

"Stand!"

"How now?" ejaculated Hunston, turning round.

"You are our prisoner."

"What for?"

"That you shall answer to the alcade."

"Pah!" ejaculated Hunston, turning round; "unhand me, or——"

But instead of complying, they only clutched him the more firmly, whereupon a short but sharp struggle took place.

Hunston, however, contrived to shake them off.

And then he darted forward, and made a desperate run of it towards the fortress in which his two redoubtable enemies had been confined.

We mean Jack Harkaway and Dick Harvey.

When he reached the castle, there was no sign of the boat. Despair!

The pursuers were fast nearing him.

He could hear their footsteps close behind him.

Suddenly he saw the boat, as he thought, flashing a signal light at him, and then he made a dash at the water, cast aside his cloak, and leapt boldly in.

He heard shots fired, and he felt sure that he was the target; but he was safe, so far.

Little did he know what had taken place in that gloomy fortress.

Little did he think that he was trusting his fortunes to the deep at the self-same moment as his old enemy, Jack Harkaway.

He heard the firing, and then he chuckled.

"The fools," he said to himself; "they have as much idea of shooting as the whistling oyster, or a white elephant."

And so he swam on.

Now, Hunston was a strong swimmer, and, spite of his loss of an arm, he made great headway.

But the task before him was more than he had counted

upon, and so it fell out that, in a very little while, he was exhausted.

He still struggled desperately on, however.

Struggled as only a drowning man will struggle.

And when he thought that it was all over with him, he fell in with Harkaway, as previously described.

CHAPTER XXV.

IN THE HANDS OF THE ENEMY.

HUNSTON remained unconscious.

Loss of blood and long immersion in the water had thoroughly exhausted him, and his senses fled.

The recognition had not been mutual.

No. Young Jack had addressed himself to his father upon making the discovery of Hunston's identity, and his words had not been overheard by Hunston himself.

And so it fell out that the Harkaways were destined to return good for evil, to save the life of the bitterest enemy they had upon the earth, one who had sought their destruction again and again.

And under what extraordinary circumstances was this to be brought about?

Harkaway the elder sat in the boat as one stupefied by the adventure.

He could not realise it yet.

* * * * *

They were soon aboard ship.

"Jack!"

"Well, Dick, old boy."

"Glad to see you by my side again, old man."

"And I too, Dick, believe me," returned Harkaway, with heartfelt sincerity.

Then they pressed each other's hand with warmth. Since they had last grasped each other's hand in silent emotion, half an hour had barely elapsed.

Certainly not more.

Yet into that half-hour had been crowded such a series of excitements that he appeared to have gone through a lifetime of wonders.

But how had Toro failed to keep his promise about the boat?

His companions had lacked courage at the moment.

When the rocket went up as a signal for the fugitive, the boat neared the shore, and the alarming sounds from the prison had roused the crew to a sense of their own danger, and the consequence was that in spite of entreaties, prayers, threats, they would not persevere in their course, and gently rowed back to their ship.

When the insensible Hunston was carried on board by Harkaway and his party, there was another who recognised him. Nero.

The monkey recognised his old enemy immediately, and would have pounced upon him.

But the crew kept him off, much to the monkey's disgust and disappointment.

Now, when Hunston had regained consciousness, a surprise was in store for him.

But very soon his feeling of satisfaction at his escape predominated over all else.

He was as tenderly cared for as if he had been a dear friend instead of a bitter enemy.

At first they felt inclined to give Hunston up to the Cuban authorities.

But this notion was soon abandoned.

"Better have left him to perish in the sea," said Harkaway, "than trust him to their mercies."

"But justice will be dealt out to him," said Captain Disher.

"Justice!" said Harkaway. "Justice is unknown there."

And so that idea was abandoned.

Harkaway did not seek for revenge upon his old enemy.

He had saved him again.

Surely this was vengeance enough for anyone.

Hunston felt it deeply, and he did not attempt to disguise his feelings upon the subject or to mince matters in any way.

"Harkaway," he said, "we have been enemies since we were boys, and shall be to our graves."

"I know it," said Harkaway.

"Then why did you save me?"

"I saw a fellow-creature perishing, and——"

"You risked your life to preserve his."

"Not knowing it was your life I was saving," persisted Harkaway, "so that you may be relieved from all sense of gratitude, if you find that embarrassing, Hunston."

"So you would not have saved me had you known who it was struggling in the water?"

"Probably not. Yet, no; I can scarcely say that."

"I know you can't," quickly returned Hunston. "You would have done it all the same. I know your spirit, and I hate you none the less for that."

Harkaway moved off, and young Jack came to see his old enemy, accompanied by Harry Girdwood and Mr. Mole.

"Hunston," said the latter, "I hope you have repented of your vicious course of life."

Hunston's reply was brief but characteristic.

"No, you old donkey, I have not."

"Shocking!" exclaimed the tutor.

"Don't preach then, Mr. Mole," said Hunston; "I can't stand it now."

"But you disabled me for life, Hunston," said the tutor, pointing grievously to his wooden leg.

"That was accidental, quite," replied Hunston. "And moreover, Mr. Mole, I wasn't engaged in that business."

"I know you were," said Harry Girdwood.

"Silence," interrupted Hunston, with contempt.

Harry Girdwood would have rushed upon him had they not restrained him.

"You thief and murderer," cried young Girdwood; "you robbed me of my brother; you murdered him, and I'll have vengeance for that foul deed."

The villain Hunston positively quailed before the indignant glance of the boy.

"And you would murder me?" he said.

"No," retorted Harry Girdwood, "for that would be letting you off too easily."

"What do you mean?"

"That I would have your life, if I could have my own way, to suffer the tortures I endure. Do you feel the loss of your arm very much?"

"I do."

His look was a mixture of sullenness and sadness, and

they saw what bitterness it had caused him. Harry Girdwood noted it.

"Well, Hunston," he said, fixing him with his deep black eyes, "I shall take your other arm." Hunston gave a start.

He had never met a boy like young Girdwood, and he felt nervous about him.

There was an earnestness in his manner—an utter absence of brag, that made Hunston fear for the future.

"Toro has already paid the penalty of his crimes," said young Jack.

"Are you sure?"

"Yes."

"Rather—we saw him lying dead with our own eyes," said Mr. Mole.

"You are mistaken, then," said Hunston, with a light laugh. "Toro is not dead; he never was, in fact, more lively than now. The wounds he received were desperate, but not fatal. He has had many a rough tussle, has Toro, and he takes a good deal of killing."

They stared again.

"Can it be true?"

"Of course it is."

"What proof have you?" inquired one of them.

"I left him on the island of Cuba. Moreover, it was I who rescued him when you left him for dead—at the peril of my own life."

They were convinced.

"So much the better," said young Harry Girdwood. "I shall have the life of my poor brother's murderer yet."

CHAPTER XXVI.

WALKING THE PLANK.

THREE or four days later the Harkaway party fell in with a stirring adventure.

It was early one morning that Nabley, the detective, discovered the spars and loose rigging of a wreck floating about to leeward.

Immediately he made known his discovery to the captain.

The captain caused boats to be lowered and observations taken, and the result of it was they made a strange and uncomfortable discovery.

There were certain signs about the wreck that told them that a battle had taken place there, and that the ill-fated vessel had been sunk in hard fighting.

What could it mean?

Who were the belligerents?

The skipper could only hazard a guess.

"I should think," said Captain Disher, "that it is a French merchantman which has fallen foul of a pirate."

This startled his hearers, as you may suppose.

"A pirate?"

"Yes."

"And what kind of pirates do you suppose them to be?"

"I should say a Chinese or Malay. I feel sure that there were Malays on board."

"Why?"

"Because we found a creese—a regular Malay instrument—stuck into one of the loose bits of the wreck; so that not only should I say there were Malays, but I should also say that they had some precious hard fighting before the Malay wretches made their victory sure."

They presently fished up a barrel half full of rum that was floating not far from the rest of the wreck, and the words branded on the barrel confirmed their belief that it was a French ship which had been destroyed.

They went on their way, saddened by the reflections which these fragments of wreck had called up.

"Ship ahead!"

"A dozen glasses were immediately set upon the distant vessel.

"What is she?" demanded the skipper.

"A Dutchman," returned one of the bystanders.

"No, no; an American," said a second.

"A Yankee, for a wager."

"A Yankee—a Yankee," echoed several.

The captain gave a long and steady look through his glass himself.

Then he handed it to Jack Harkaway the elder.

"What do you say, Mr. Harkaway?" he asked.

Jack took the glass.

Then he gave a long, steady look before he pronounced his opinion.

"It is a Chinese junk."

Captain Disher took back his glass and looked long and earnestly through it.

"Well, captain?"

The skipper nodded at Harkaway.

"You are right."

"Is it a Chinaman?"

"Yes."

Every minute now made it less and less a matter of doubt.

A sailor up aloft on the look-out came down, the cords gliding swiftly through his glowing hands, bursting with a piece of most significant intelligence.

"Is it a junk, Ben?" said Harkaway.

"Aye, aye, your honour," echoed Ben Hawser, for he was the look-out man from up aloft; "a precious rum junk, too."

"What do you mean by that, Ben?"

"Why, a shark," returned Ben Hawser, with an oath; "and if it ain't the werry identical shark as sunk that poor Frenchman, why, you may call me the greatest land-lubber as ever crawled."

"Do you think there is any thing suspicious in the craft?" demanded Harkaway in an undertone.

"I do," replied the skipper.

"Why?"

"You may trust Ben Hawser as well as most men. He has had more experience than I have," added the captain, with great frankness; "more than any hand aboard this ship."

"But may he not be mistaken?"

"I doubt it."

And soon all doubt upon the subject was set at rest.

They were fast gaining upon the Chinaman, until at length they could, by the aid of their glasses, make out the build of the vessel, and finally the figures of the crew moving about on board.

"Ben!" said Captain Disher.

"Your honour."

"Come here."

The skipper and the old tar went aft to converse alone.

They talked together for some few moments in great earnestness.

Then they called the rest of them into their confidence.

"Will you gentlemen step here for a moment?" said the skipper.

"Mr. Harkaway!"

"Sir?"

"Mr. Harvey!"

"Here."

"Mr. Nabley!"

"Here."

"Mr. Pike!"

"Here."

"Now all we want are Mr. Magog Brand and Mr. Jefferson."

"Where's young Jack?" said Harkaway, senior.

"Here, dad."

"Go below and fetch Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Brand."

"Say that Captain Disher begs the favour of a few minutes' conversation," said the skipper.

"Aye aye, sir," said young Jack.

"A smart lad, your son, Mr. Harkaway," said Captain Disher, "and you ought to be proud of him."

"I am."

"And I too," said Harvey; "we all are proud of him, in fact, and reason we have too for our pride."

Back came young Jack, followed by Mr. Jefferson and his little friend Magog Brand, and the two negroes, Sunday and Monday, and Isaac Mole.

"Now, gentlemen," said Captain Disher, "I have a matter to consult you on which demands the greatest discretion."

"You can rely on us all," said Mr. Jefferson.

"I know it."

"It is about the Chinaman out yonder, if I mistake not," said Magog Brand.

The captain nodded.

"That is a Chinese pirate!"

"A pirate!" echoed his hearers, in a breath.

"Yes; moreover, it is a vessel which Ben Hawser

knows of old. It is a junk that cruises about these latitudes, preying upon the smaller craft, and, as a rule, fighting very shy of any thing likely to give them any trouble. Now, they would not be likely to cause us any trouble if we chose to show them a clean pair of heels."

"Then, by all means, do it," said Mr. Mole eagerly.

"Silence!"

"Let the captain continue."

"Now I have a scheme for playing a little game of our own with John Chinaman, if you are all willing."

"Explain, captain," said Mr. Jefferson.

"Why, the game I have to propose would involve us in some danger, and I don't know whether we should be justified in leading you into it."

"Why not?"

"At least not without your consent."

"We give it."

"Understand," said the captain, "that with your consent danger, and perhaps death, will be close to every man on board."

"Very good, gentlemen; I knew you would be all of that mind, only as you have wives and families, I thought you would like to have the matter submitted to your consideration first," said Captain Disher.

"Put it to the vote," suggested Magog Brand.

"Hands up, then!" said the skipper, "hands up for ayes—who agrees to follow out my scheme?"

All hands went up but Isaac Mole's.

Thereupon the tutor, finding himself alone, was fearful of losing his character for bravery, and up went his hand with a flourish.

"All agreed?"

"All!"

"Very good."

"Now for the details," said Mr. Jefferson.

"And count upon my help," said Mr. Mole, grandly.

"Thank you, sir," replied the captain, who had a certain sense of the ridiculous; "no doubt it will prove most valuable."

And then Captain Disher proceeded to explain his plans for tricking the Chinese pirate ship.

They had a few guns—very few—but amongst them was one which was a terrible weapon.

It was only a small brass swivel-gun, but it was mounted upon a clever mechanical contrivance, which made it as easy to point as a pocket pistol, and it was as true as a die.

This they placed upon the quarter-deck and covered it over with a piece of tarpaulin, so that it looked more like luggage, with a covering to protect it from the weather, than a gun.

"The next thing, captain?" demanded Jefferson.

"Muster all the small arms on board; let every thing be loaded and placed in readiness for immediate use."

"Next?"

"Next let the cutlasses be——"

"Man overboard!" cried the look-out.

"Where?"

"From the Chinaman, sir," was the reply. "They've made a poor devil walk the plank, your honour."

Glasses were brought to bear upon the scene, and it was found to be true.

The pirates had got an unfortunate wretch of a prisoner, whom they had just driven overboard with blows and prods from their marlinspikes, cutlasses, creeses, and other weapons.

The look-out had seen them distinctly force the unhappy being over the ship's side, and he was seen struggling in the water, until he caught at a floating spar and held himself up by its aid.

They sailed on, until, when near him, they had him picked up by one of the ship's boats.

Just in time.

Had they been ten minutes later, he would have gone down for ever.

The rescued man was a little fat fellow, with a round bullet head, and a fat face with a long moustache and imperial, worn after the fashion of the late Emperor Napoleon.

He was so thoroughly exhausted that he was scarcely able to thank his rescuers for awhile, but when he did get his breath, his volubility was something amazing.

"I can nevere tank you so mosh dan I would," said he, bowing to his knees before Captain Disher. "You have saved my life, capitaine."

"All right, mounseer," replied Captain Disher; "no use

to palaver over it. I should have done as much for any scoundrel afloat."

"*Morbleu!*"

"Now tell us," said Harkaway, eagerly. "Is yonder vessel a pirate?"

"*Pardieu!* Yes."

"Small need to ask it," said the captain.

"And they have fought a French ship?" asked Jack.

"Yes, mine, my ship."

"Name the ship?"

"*'La Fleur de Marie,' du Havre.*"

"You fought hard, I suppose?"

"*Comment donc!*" ejaculated the little Gaul, fiercely. "Hard! we fight like *gèants*."

"Many killed?"

"*Helas, hélas!*" sighed the Frenchman; "all."

"All?"

"*Oui, monsieur, tous.*"

"Two?" said the skipper, with a puzzled air; "and that all the crew. The '*Fleur de Mary*' couldn't have been a very important craft."

"No," remarked Jack Harkaway, laughing heartily at this; "*tous* is the French for all—everybody."

"Oh!" cried the skipper, quite nettled at his mistake; "then if two means everybody, it's a damned stupid lingo, that's all I've got to say on the matter."

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE BATTLE WITH THE PIRATE.

"Hold hard, mounseer! Did they see us aboard the junk before you had to walk into the water?"

"No."

"Sure?"

"Certain, monsieur."

"Then it is possible that they have not seen us even yet," cried Harkaway.

"Scarcely," said Captain Disher; "they would watch him in the water, and then they would be sure to see us, even if their look-out had been so badly kept before."

' *Peut-être* perhaps," said the little Frenchman ; " I am not sure. They were all so dronks than a pig. I mix de grog myself."

"I don't quite understand how you mean," said Jack Harkaway. "How came you to mix the grog for them?"

"I will tell you," replied the little man ; "when dey fall upon us, and I see dat we shall all be lost—all be *prisonniers* or killed, so I got de laudanum from de medicine box, and pour into de rum and de wine."

"Oho !" cried Harkaway ; "I see now."

"So I serve dem all grog, and presently half began to snore ; but dere was tree of de crew—*des abrutis*—beasts Malays, who will not to drink, and dey suspect someting—*les miserables* ! Dey make me walk de plank into de sea, where dey pretend to see sharks."

"So then, Mossoo Potirong," said Captain Disher, "the best part of this crew are tight?"

"Tight?"

"Yes."

"Vat is tight?"

"Half seas ovare."

The little Frenchman was puzzled at this.

"Half seas ovare? I do not know him more dan de oder."

"Groggy—soapy," explained one of the bystanders ; and then he showed it by pantomimic gestures.

He made signs of drinking, and then rolled about with an exaggerated unsteadiness of gait which there was no misunderstanding.

"I see, I see," said Hypolite Potiron ; "*gris—en ribote*."

"Call it whatever you like, monsieur ; we means tight," persisted Ben Hawser, "and that's clear enough for any honest man to say—tight's the word."

"Vell, then, tight—yes, monsieurs ; so dronk dan Polonais."

Ben Hawser stared again at this queer simile.

"As drunk as polonies !" he exclaimed. "Well, of all the rum lingoos, this blessed parleyvoo licks them all."

Harkaway got impatient of these misunderstandings and playing on mistakes in language, and so, as briefly as possible, he put the matter before M. Hypolite Potiron.

"What we want to do is this," said Harkaway ; "we

think that, without exposing ourselves to any very desperate risk, we can take a rise out of John Chinaman."

Monsieur Potiron nodded approvingly.

"Vat sall you do?"

"You shall see."

They set to work in the first place to rig up a tarpaulin canopy on deck, which was to shelter their operations from view.

Under this canopy they set to work actively to collect their small arms, which were loaded by two of the sailors.

They next got the largest gun they possessed up under their canopy and wheeled it round into position.

This done, the captain asked for good marksmen to volunteer to go up into the rigging.

"Consider me for one, captain," said Magog Brand; "my Remington will pick a few of the pirates off."

"I'll make one," added Jefferson, "and the rascals shall find I am no baby with powder and shot."

"I'll join you," said Nabley, who was a crack shot.

"I'm with you also," cried Pike, and he followed his comrade into the shrouds.

"Gently does it, gentlemen all," said Captain Disher.

"Gently it is."

"Understand, if they should happen to be on the lookout, in spite of Mounseer Puttyrong's dosing, they must not suspect any thing."

"That's true, captain," said Jefferson.

And so the shrouds were manned by volunteer sharpshooters.

Every man carried a death-dealing weapon and twenty rounds.

Every round meant death for someone, for those brave men scarcely knew what missing the mark meant.

"I've read, Captain Disher," said young Jack Harkaway, "of burning a vessel."

"How?"

"Red-hot shot, captain."

"Well, Master Harkaway, and what then?"

"Why not try it on now?"

"There is something in what you say, my lad."

"Then you'll do it?"

"What do you say, Mr. Harkaway, to your son's suggestion?" asked the captain.

"Might do worse," replied Harkaway.

"True ; but I must fire low."

"Just above the watermark, I suppose?" said Harkaway.

"That's it."

"Good."

The preparations went bravely on.

Ten bold and skilful marksmen were up in the rigging.

These were Magog Brand, Jefferson, Nabley, Pike, Dick Harvey, Monday, Harry Girdwood, a passenger named Professor Shloppen, who was near-sighted, and shot in spectacles with a muzzle-loader, and two of the sailors.

The two guns beneath the tarpaulin canopy were manned by the most efficient gunners on board.

The crew were then all summoned to the captain's side, and he gave them a brief but stirring address.

"Listen to me, my lads," Captain Disher said ; "I've got some good news for you. Now I have reason to believe that, as true-born men, you will be mightily pleased to hear——"

"Aye, aye, captain."

"Well, my men, the Chinaman you see ahead of us is a pirate."

The men gave a groan.

"Those sharks have just run down and scuttled a French ship, and murdered the crew and passengers in cold blood."

Another groan.

"Well, I ask you, as Englishmen and Americans, can you stand by and witness these things?"

"No!"

"No, no!"

"No, of course we can't," said the captain. "Then what shall we do?"

"Down with the pirates!" cried the crew, with one voice.

"That's it," said the skipper ; "I knew you would say that. Down with the pirates! Now we must make them feel our power."

"Aye, aye, captain, let them feel our power," cried the sailors, some of them commencing to tuck up their sleeves.

"Now, I'll tell you," continued Captain Disher, "that

poor devil of a mounseer we rescued has greatly helped us, to begin with. He has made a lot of them square by hoccussing their grog."

"Hurrah for the mounseer!" shouted one of the crew.

"According to his report, there are only a few of the men fit to take care of themselves; but three to one we don't mind, but we must creep up close on to 'em. Then before they can say Jack Robinson, pop a couple of red-hot shot into 'em."

"But suppose, your honour," said one of the sailors, "that they turn up right and show fight?"

"Well, what then?"

"It might look awkward like if we couldn't get out of range of their guns."

"Out of range be blowed!" interrupted Ben Hawser.

"Why, we have got a lot of gentlemen in the rigging as can shoot against any team in creation."

"Yes, but——"

"But—but—but!" cried Ben Hawser, impatiently, "the skunks won't stand a chance against us; they'll be picked off as fast as they appear."

"But they may be twenty to one."

"I confess," said the captain, "we have got a tough job before us, but if we are all of one mind, and plenty of pluck, we shall avenge those poor French men and women who have been brutally murdered."

"Huzza!" cried one of the more enthusiastic of the men.

And then they all took up the cry, with the exception of one man.

He did not seem to relish the job, and grumblingly he dissented.

"But supposing that we should be beaten?"

"And——"

"And get into a mess?"

"Why, then," coolly returned Captain Disher, "we should in all probability be made short work of——"

"Ugh!"

"You don't care for that?"

"Well, I don't. I signed articles to help work ship, not to fight pirates."

"So you did, Mason," returned the captain, quickly. "so you did."

"And I don't care to——"

"Quite right," interrupted Captain Disher, thoroughly incensed at this. "Go down below until the skirmish is over. Down with you."

The man paused, and then, irritated by the crew, he turned round and faced the skipper with a bold front.

"Go down below, Mason," said the captain, sharply, "and save your precious skin. No remarks. We don't want any half-hearted men. They do more harm than good at such a time as this."

Mason retreated and went below.

The rest of the crew were not merely willing to fight the pirate, they were delighted with the chance.

The preparations for the encounter being so far completed in one direction, they turned their attention to the decoy part of the performance.

It was done in this way.

A quadrille party was got up aft by the sailors, a clumsy affair, for they were better at hornpipes than at the "ladies' chain," but it was good enough for the purpose.

All that was wanted, of course, was a show of amusements, in order to make the pirates all the more sure of an easy and bloodless victory, when they chose to strike.

Altogether it was a very singular sight.

Eight burly Jack tars performing a quadrille while another was fiddling away.

Young Jack and Harry Girdwood were dressed up in female apparel, and to look at the peaceful gaiety of the scene, few persons would have dreamt that warlike preparations were so far advanced that they were eagerly awaiting the moment to strike.

Nearer and nearer the two ships drew to each other.

And now they were so near that up aloft they could see distinctly all that was going forward on board.

This corroborated all that the little Frenchman had said.

There were three or four dark-skinned fellows, naked to their waists, and armed with a formidable array of knives and pistols stuck in their belts.

These were the Malays.

It was pretty evident that they were the only members of the crew that were not under the influence of liquor.

"Do they all seem asleep or dead on board?" asked the captain.

Jefferson gave a look through the glass again before replying.

"The Malays are busy enough, captain," he replied, "but the Chinamen appear to me to be asleep. They're calling them up from below."

"I can see them tumbling up."

"So can I," said Magog Brand; "they're swarming up the hatchways now like bees."

"Up they come."

It was true.

The thought of plunder near had served more than anything else to shake off the drowsiness of the pirates.

In the space of about ten minutes the deck was literally alive with the repulsive looking wretches who traded in slaughter.

"They appear to be working into something," said Pike; "I can see one man, who appears to be an officer, giving commands."

"*Un grand ?*" called up Monsieur Potiron; "a tall, big von ?"

"Yes."

"Dat is de capitaine."

"Is he? By gum!" ejaculated Pike. "Then he shall have half an ounce of solid lead if I can shoot a little bit."

"I say, mounseer," said Captain Disher, "can you shoot?"

"*Un peu*—a leetle," answered the Frenchman. "See here."

He drew back his coat and showed a silver medal on his breast.

"*Premier prix*—first prize for shooting at the *tir*," he said, proudly.

"You clamber up into the rigging, then," said the captain, quickly. "You know their officers, and you can pick them off."

The Frenchman was soon provided with a capital rifle—Harkaway's property—and up he went like a cat.

Once there, he could not control his impatience as the others had done, but taking a long, steady aim at the pirate captain, he blazed away.

The tall pirate captain dropped with a bullet in his brain.

"Who's that?" called out Captain Disher, furiously.

"Me," returned Monsieur Potiron, proudly. "I have kill de capitaine."

"And us too, very likely; hang your blundering. Now then, Ben Hawser."

"Aye, aye, sir."

"Stand to your guns."

"Aye, aye, your honour."

"Every shot must tell! Aim low—just above the water line."

"Ready now—blaze away!"

This was the best course to pursue after all, as the precipitate Potiron had put them upon the alert.

In less than a minute more, their dwarf battery was unmasked, and Ben Hawser sped his first iron messenger, crashing into the junk's side.

They watched eagerly for the result.

It struck her just above the water line, and they could see that it was a goodly hole.

The Chinese now yelled themselves hoarse in striving to work themselves into something like a fit state for righting their ship.

One of the Malays took up the command promptly, and mounting upon a chest, he issued commands right and left, through a speaking trumpet.

He appeared to be getting matters ship-shape; so Hypolite Potiron looked after him.

He took his aim steadily, and fired.

And the Malay, throwing up his arms, dropped down from his chest dead.

"Two!" cried the little Frenchman; "I must have a score, before I shall be happy."

Meanwhile the Chinese had run out their guns and unmasked their portholes.

Every gun was fully manned.

"Now!" cried Jefferson to his companions generally, "listen to me. We must not waste a shot—let us pick out our men—do you hear?"

"We do."

"Listen. Waste not a word—not a moment, any more than a shot. This is of the highest importance. I take the furthest gunner. You, Magog, take the next."

"Good."

"You, Pike, the next."

"Good."

"You the next, Nabley."

"I will."

"Monday."

"Sar?"

"Pick out the men bringing the ammunition."

"Yes, sar."

"Now, then, steady—aim slowly, fire, and reload."

"Good!" said the marksmen in the shrouds, with one voice.

Then came a rattling volley!

Six of the pirates dropped upon the deck, four writhing in the throes of death, two quite dead.

Six men stepped into their places at once.

But before they could make another step in the loading of the guns, they were picked off.

While they were thus engaged, a red-hot shot had been dropped in the midst of the pirate crew by Ben Hawser.

And there occurred a momentary panic amongst the Chinese, which looked as though it was all over with them.

But fast as some were killed, there were others to supply their places, so numerous were these pests of the seas.

Meanwhile Sunday had clambered into the topmost part of the rigging, glass in hand, and with a rifle strapped across his back.

He saw that the pirates were now making the most desperate efforts to work the ship, while the majority of the crew were fighting.

Consequently he rendered signal service by picking off the man who was at the helm.

Five minutes had not elapsed since the hot-headed little Potiron had fired his first unlucky shot, and already the pirates had lost over forty men.

It was hot work.

"Look out! They're sending sharpshooters up into the rigging!"

Three of the rifles were turned from the gunners.

"Hold hard!" cried Jefferson, coolly, "don't be rash. Keep to the gunners, or it will soon be all over with us. Let them get up well before we fire."

This was valuable advice to give.

Had they left the gunners free to continue the strife, it would have gone hard with the American ship.

Sunday let one fellow get on to the crosstrees and settle himself comfortably.

Then he loaded rapidly.

"Now, you ugly nigger," said he, "you shall have it, by golly!"

And he dropped a bullet into the fellow's body.

It was not a desperate wound, but the shock made him lose his balance.

He staggered.

Tried to catch at the crosstree and save himself.

In vain.

He jerked round and toppled over, sending the man beneath him headlong on to the deck.

And so they scattered confusion for a moment amongst their friends, and put themselves out of the fight for good.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE END OF THE FIGHT—A DISASTER.

"A good shot, Sunday," said Jefferson; and as he spoke, he picked off another of the men who were vainly endeavouring to work the guns.

Any man amongst the Chinese who showed himself at all prominently was dropped in a twinkling, sometimes with two or more bullets in his wretched carcase.

Meanwhile, three red-hot shots had been sent on board the junk, which was burning in two places.

"Steady, lads!" cried Captain Disher.

Sunday had been gliding down the rigging hand-over-hand, as fast as he could come.

But, alack for the faithful and brave black! just as he was nearing the deck, a ball from the junk struck him in the calf of his right leg.

Down he fell, howling.

"I see the skunk," said Jefferson, firing a shot as coolly as though he was practising at the butts.

He had seen him, and what is more, he picked him off,

thus avenging Sunday before his wound was one minute old.

Sunday scrambled up and crawled to Captain Disher's side, while the latter was in earnest consultation with Jack Harkaway the elder about the progress of the fight.

"Do you think it is safe?" the captain was saying as Sunday approached.

"Safe as can be," was Harkaway's reply.

"We have had it all our own way up to the present, for they were taken by surprise," said the captain; "but once let them get one of their big guns into position, and it would be all over with us."

"That's it," returned Harkaway; "but we don't mean to let them. We all know there's danger, but no more than what we run at present, and short of dropping a red-hot shot into their powder magazine, I don't see how——"

"Dat's me," said Sunday, hobbling up, with a groan.

"Hullo, Sunday! Scratched?" said Harkaway.

"Yes, sar; dem dam tiefs shoot dis poor beggar in de carf."

"Go below and get it seen to, then, at once."

"Presently, sar," said Sunday, "jes now I'se busy."

"What?"

"I want to speak to you pertickler, gemmen. I'se come to tell you, Massa Harkaway, where dey get de powder from."

His hearers started.

"The magazine?"

"Where is it situated?" added the captain.

"Yes, sar."

"Tell us where, my good fellow," said the captain, eagerly; "and then get down below to look after your hurt, for brave men are scarce."

"Help me up, sar, on to de chest, and I'll p'int it out."

They obeyed.

"Now then, Sunday, quick," said Harkaway, very anxiously.

"You see dat gong swing jes a little way aft?"

"Yes."

"Well?"

"Well, gemmen, dey fetches der powder from jes behind dat."

"Do they?"

Harkaway spotted the place through his glass.

"Well?" said Captain Disher.

Harkaway nodded his head.

"Sunday's right."

"Then hang me," cried the captain, "if they'll bring much more powder from there."

He jumped from the chest, and in a few strides was beside Ben Hawser.

Now Ben was stripped to the waist, and was working his gun with marvellous ease and rapidity.

He was thoroughly enjoying himself.

"Ben," said the captain.

"Your honour."

"We have good news."

"The warmints have struck?" said Ben, excitedly.

"No."

"What then?"

"We have spotted their powder magazine."

Ben gave a regular jump when he heard this.

"Is it a fact, captain?"

"It is."

"Then you just let me know its precise latitude and longitude, and damme, though I say it as shouldn't, Captain Disher, they shan't take much more powder from there."

"Sight for the swinging gong that hangs aft."

"Aye, aye, your honour."

"The magazine is just beyond."

"Sure?"

"Quite."

"Enough said, your honour."

Ben Hawser chuckled mightily, as he sighted his gun for the gong.

He did not let his mirth spoil his careful aim, for he felt certain now of putting an end to the battle at a single stroke.

"Now for the shot."

The ball, heated to whiteness, was swung into the cannon, and Ben took his long fusee.

"Ready!"

"Look out! Danger ahoy!" shouted those aloft.

"They're lowering boats."

Bang went the gun, and there was a terrific crash on board the pirate.

The alarming cry from those aloft had startled Ben Hawser at the critical moment, and he had applied the fusee just a second or so too late.

Though the water was comparatively still, care had to be taken to allow to a nicety for the rise and fall of the vessel.

The consequence was that instead of landing the magazine, as he had fondly hoped and expected, he shot the gong.

It was far from being a bad shot as it happened, but yet not near enough.

"I've played the last tune on their Chinee fiddle," said Ben Hawser, grimly, "but I must land their magazine."

But this was easier said than done.

The alarm given from aloft proved to be too well founded.

While apparently lost in confusion, the pirates were quietly planning a bold retaliation.

The water was suddenly seen to be literally alive with boats, and the peril was serious for our friends.

Captain Disher and Harkaway held a hurried consultation on the matter.

"What is your advice now, Mr. Harkaway?" demanded the skipper.

"This is a puzzler."

"Something must be done, and sharply, too."

"It must."

"We shall have to sheer off."

"Never."

"We must, for the pirates are yet twenty to one of us."

"Drop a shot or two into the boats. Let Ben Hawser try his skill on them."

"Yes, and what of the pirates in the junk?"

The sharpshooters in the rigging are taking care of them."

"No ; it will not do. If we once let their boats swarm around us, we are lost. Once let them be free to work their guns, and good-bye to us. The smartness of our fire, and our great activity, have alone kept us safely through the job so far."

He gave orders for working the ship.

The change in her tactics was at once perceived, for the pirates in the boats set up the most discordant cries and cheers.

Presently Harkaway came with a rush to offer Captain Disher a suggestion.

"What now, Mr. Harkaway?" asked the captain.

"Why not lower some boats to meet them?"

The captain reflected for a moment.

"It would gain time, if it did no further good."

"I think you are right, Mr. Harkaway. I'll have boats lowered. May I leave you in charge, while I go aft and get volunteers to man the boats?"

"Good."

The captain called for volunteers for the boats, and a dozen came forward at once to offer their services.

Amongst these volunteers were two lads.

These two lads were young Girdwood and Jack Harkaway, Junior.

Young Jack was full of eagerness to be off before his father or Dick Harvey should see them, for he guessed that they would soon put a stop to his fighting, if they should discover it.

The rowers pulled desperately for the nearest of the pirate's boats.

Two of the latter had been lowered and manned a few minutes before the others, and now they were considerably in advance of the rest of them.

To engage those two boats was the intention of the desperate—not to say foolhardy—young heroes.

The pirates, who were not notorious for their bravery, be it remarked, pulled to meet them, simply because they were ignorant of how far in advance they were of their own companions.

Otherwise, they would not have ventured two boats against one of their enemy.

No.

Six to one was their notion of proper fighting odds.

"Pull into this near boat," cried young Jack, excitedly.
"Let's bear them down."

"Aye, aye!" cried the rowers, as if with one voice.

The Chinese were yelling and shouting, and brandishing long knives, as though they would have made sausage meat of them all.

But no sooner did they see the boat nearing them, than they pulled away with desperation.

"The measly skunks!" ejaculated one of the sailors. "Give 'em a volley."

"No, no," cried Harry Girdwood; "not just yet."

He was not less brave than his young comrade, but he was not quite so impetuous.

The battle is not always to the brave.

But his commands were not strictly obeyed.

One of the pirates, a tall Chinese, in a brown jacket, or rather smock, made himself conspicuous, by standing up, and giving orders with a good deal of noise, and young Jack could not resist the pleasure of having a pop at him with his revolver.

The fellow dropped with a howl of pain.

The fall of their leader spread dismay and confusion amongst the crew of the boat, and they would have got out of range sharply if they had been able.

If.

But they were not.

This proved to be the signal for a general fight, during which the second boat pulled nearer and nearer, assailing them with vigour.

"Larboard and starboard, we shall get it now!" exclaimed one of the boat's crew.

"Run into this one. Chop them down in a crack, and then we shall be free to bowl over the rest."

It was not quite so easy done as said.

They pulled with desperate vigour to the boat in question, but before they had made a dozen boats' lengths, their progress was checked.

A volley from the pirates disabled one of their rowers.

The sailors blazed away at the pirates, but the second boat approached, and now the fight became precious hot.

Three of the sailors besides young Girdwood were wounded and it began to look desperate.

"Close with them, or we shall all be picked off before we can get a slap at them."

A volley from the farther boat now rattled about them.

Three of their rifles were immediately turned upon it, and three of the pirates in that boat dropped.

Amidst cries of anguish, and yells of defiance, they pulled on until the two boats dashed against each other.

Simultaneously, the crews fell upon each other with desperation.

Knives, pistols, creeses, hatchets, cutlasses, were used with such vigour that in a few seconds the blood was running like water, and there was not a man or boy present that was not wounded.

Then it was that the superiority of the British and Americans showed itself over the Celestials.

The vigour of the onslaught was such that the Chinese were knocked all of a heap in the middle of their boat.

It would have been an easy victory comparatively, had not the second boat pulled into them.

Then young Jack, who was leaning on his cutlass, trying vainly to staunch an ugly cut in his side, saw their peril.

"Look out, my lads," he shouted ; "lower your cars, and pull off, or we shall be caught between two fires."

Several of the men scrambled back to their seats, while the rest pushed off by the Chinese boat, leaving a ghastly proof of their prowess behind them.

"There's a boat coming to support us."

"Where?"

"There, from the ship."

"Hurrah?"

"We'll give 'em pepper yet," cried one of the men.

The two pirates followed them up, while the other boat slowly drew near.

"That's a rum sort of reinforcement to send," cried the coxswain, looking over his shoulder.

"Why rum?" asked the next man.

"Why, there's only two men in the boat."

This was true.

One of these men was the cowardly member of the crew, who had been ordered below by Captain Disher at the commencement of the action.

The other was Jack Harkaway's evil genius, the ruffian Hunston.

How came they together?

They were kindred spirits, and a word will presently explain the seeming mystery.

Desperate indeed was the position of young Jack's party.

Already overmatched by the foe, who mustered more than thrice their strength, they were falling back, not upon friends, but upon their worst enemies.

The boats drew closer again.

And now, when they were within pistol-shot, Hunston stood up in the boat, and fired point blank at Harry Girdwood. The shot missed.

But the object was attained, and this was to show the pirates that they were friends, and fighting upon their—the pirates'—side.

In the space of two minutes the three boats closed around the gallant little crew.

"Yield?" cried one of the officers of the pirates, a Malay, who spoke English tolerably well.

Jem Frost, the coxswain of the boat leaped, upon the speaker, and with one desperate stroke, he cut him fairly through the skull, so that his death must have been almost instantaneous.

This was the signal for a renewal of the fight.

The scramble was so hot, and they were also so closely jammed, that their weapons were half the time idle.

They clubbed each other with pistols, and struck out with their fists.

But this could not last long.

English, Yankees, and Chinese fell in the water, and clutched with such fierce desperation that they sank together in each other's arms, and when, from sheer exhaustion, a momentary lull took place in the fearful carnage, but one man was sufficiently unhurt on board the American boat to stand upright.

This was Jem Frost.

He stood up, bleeding from three flesh wounds in the face, and holding in his hand his trusty cutlass, dripping with the blood of five or six of the enemy, whom he had put out of the way of doing further mischief in this world, and looking so formidable that the enemy scarce dared to tackle him alone.

"Lower your arm, Jem," cried his old messmate, who had turned traitor, "and they'll give you quarter."

"That's a lie!" retorted Jem Frost, "and you know it."

"I swear——"

"Hold your jaw, I don't want no palaver with a deserter. You're one of the enemy. Look to yourself, for, damme, here's for you."

Saying which the gallant fellow, in sheer desperation, sprang at him and cut him down.

Then, swinging round his fearful weapon, he shouted—

"Come on, you infernal pirates, and try the strength of a true sailor."

And he did damage right and left, until his sword arm was broken by a pistol shot ; and as his weapon dropped by his side, the pirates fell upon him and bore him down, and they stabbed and jabbed and cut at the brave fellow until his body was hacked into a score of bits, and thrown to the ravenous sharks who followed the scent of blood.

"Throw the prisoners into the water to the sharks," ejaculated the chief officer of the pirates, "and let us see them eaten."

It would have been done, too, had not Hunston interfered.

"I want to save two of them," he said.

"Who are you that gives orders ? We can save none."

And so saying, the ruffian pirate waved his hand as a signal to his men.

The poor wounded sailors were hurled over, and fell a speedy prey to the ravenous sharks, who played about the boats, reddening the water at each fresh step in this horrible feast.

Two of the pirates dragged up young Jack, who was nearly insensible from fatigue and loss of blood, and were about to hurl him overboard.

At this critical moment Hunston showed both presence of mind and determination.

Whipping out his revolver, he presented it full at the officer who had given the command.

"Stay your hand. If they throw the boy in, you shall die and follow him."

"What do you mean ? Silence, or you shall share his fate."

"Put the boy down."

The two men looked at their officer for confirmation of this order.

The officer felt unhappy in his mind, for Hunston's pistol was near his head, and so he signified by a word of assent that they could obey the obstinate and one-armed savage.

You shall pay for this with your life."

"I'm quite ready," answered Hunston "to your captain, when we get on board. "In the meantime, I shall see those two boys taken to the ship alive. They are not to die yet, and not so quickly as that. When their time does come, you shall be satisfied."

And that is how young Jack Harkaway and Harry Girdwood came to be preserved by their enemy, Hunston.

CHAPTER XXIX.

WHERE IS YOUNG JACK ?

DOUBTLESS the reader is wondering how Hunston, a prisoner on board the American ship, contrived to escape and in company with the traitor who had refused to fight against the Chinese pirates, and who had been sent below by Captain Disher in disgrace.

It was the simplest matter in the world.

When the man had gone below, he had come in contact with Hunston, and soon his dissatisfaction had been perceived by the prisoner.

Now, Hunston was not slow to profit by such a circumstance as this, and soon there sprang up between these two false men a mutual understanding.

It is needless to enter into particulars now ; suffice it to say that they made a guilty compact together.

The traitor sailor got a boat during the confusion which prevailed on board, and profiting by the state of affairs, he and Hunston contrived to get clear off the ship.

* * * * *

Captain Disher watched in breathless interest the conflict of the boats.

But when he saw his brave people beaten down, hurled into the water one after another, he turned away in a very troubled state of mind.

But all this time Harkaway had no idea that his boy— young Jack—and Harry Girdwood were in one of the boats, and consequently amongst the slain or prisoners.

Poor Harkaway !

He little dreamed that the life of his boy hung on a thread during that critical time.

"They are all done for," said Harkaway, turning to the captain.

"I fear so," said the captain, after a pause. "But look again, Mr. Harkaway. Have they thrown all the prisoners overboard?"

"All—stay, they appear to be taking one or two on board."

"Indeed!"

"Yes."

"Can you distinguish who they are?"

"No; yet stay, they look to me just like two boys."

"Boys?"

"Yes."

"How came boys to be on such a service? I sent no boys."

"Why, there's one just gone up," continued Harkaway, peering through his glass, "that looks about the age of my Jack. You—surely you never accepted his service."

"I—I—I really don't know; there were so many," replied the captain, "asking to engage with the pirates. But I trust your brave boy is not with them."

"Sir, if my boy has been permitted to make one of the fighting crews in those boats, you shall account to me for his death."

"Shall?"

"Yes—shall."

"Mr. Harkaway!" cried Captain Disher, "you forget yourself."

"If," continued Harkaway, not heeding the interruption, "if it be shown that you have aided my rash boy to destroy himself, you shall account to me for it, sir—to me, with your life."

Captain Disher bowed.

"I am always at your service, Mr. Harkaway," he replied, coldly, "when and where you please; once my duties ended on board this ship, you may depend I shall be ready to meet you."

CHAPTER XXX.

THE FRUITS OF GLORY.

CAPTAIN DISHER and Harkaway did not exchange a word for some time, but the captain made inquiries, and found to his regret that both young Jack and Harry Girdwood were of the party in the boats.

When they had dropped out of rifle range of the pirates, Magog Brand and Mr. Jefferson came down from their perches in the rigging.

"Captain Disher," said the latter, "we have paid heavily for our triumph."

The captain's countenance fell at this.

"Poor boy," murmured Jefferson. "Brave young Jack? Who will break the news to his mother? I wouldn't face her for one."

The skipper winced.

If these were the sentiments of Mr. Jefferson, who was in no way responsible for young Jack's loss, how must he—the captain—have felt?

* * * * *

"Captain."

"Well, Ben?"

"Heard the latest news, your honour, from below?"

"Below!"

"Aye, sir."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, he's escaped."

The captain started.

"Who's escaped?"

"The prisoner—that there one-finned skunk."

"Hunston?"

"The same."

"How the dickens could he have got away?"

"In a boat. While we was fighting the ship, he got a boat somehow."

"But he had no assistance at hand."

"That's where you're wrong, sir," replied Ben Hawser. "He had that confounded warmint you sent below 'cause he got the bellyache about having to fight a bit."

"You don't mean——"

"That's what I do mean, captain," returned Ben, gravely; "and what's more, one of our men see 'em, in their boat, cut off our men's retreat in the cutter."

"Indeed!" ejaculated the captain, with an oath. "I hope I may live to see the villain swinging at our yard-arm."

Ben shook his head.

"You'll never do that, Captain Disher," he answered gravely.

"Won't I, by——"

"No."

"I will."

"Scuse me, captain, you never will, for he's already ate up by the sharks. Brave Jem Frost cut him down, and then got finished himself. But he gave 'em something all round, it seems, before they could settle him."

"Brave fellow!"

"He was that, sir. It seems he peppered them right and left, raked 'em fore and aft, as one might say, in a manner of speaking.

"Blow me, Captain Disher," continued Ben; "it gives me a tingling in the snout as if my blessed peepers was a-going to begin pumping.

"Damme, sir, they're hanging out signals of distress already for my old pal, Jem Frost."

* * * * *

Need we say that Mrs. Harkaway was heartbroken when she became aware of her loss?

The shocking mishap, which closed their otherwise triumphant brush with the pirate, cast a gloom over the whole of the ship's company and passengers for the rest of the voyage.

Poor Emily! it seriously affected her health.

Do what they would, she could not be roused from the deep melancholy which settled upon her.

Jack and their many friends vainly tried to comfort her.

Mr. Jefferson exerted all his reasoning powers, and exerted them in vain.

"You must not make yourself so wretched over this, Mrs. Harkaway," he repeated continually. "You see that our Jack has a special knack of his own of getting out of the most difficult scrapes."

She shook her head and sighed in reply.

"This is more difficult than all, Mr. Jefferson," she would say. "I dare not even hope that my poor boy lives."

"I'll bet my life, ma'am, that he does."

"It is not likely."

"Why not?"

"You think as you wish. I would that I could too."

"My dear lady," the giant Kentuckian would reply, "I don't simply think, I know, positively know—it is a species of instinct with me, that is precisely the same as positive knowledge—your boy lives, and will be restored to you. Of that you may be as sure as that we two are at present here talking together."

"I wish I could think so," was all the answer that the bereaved mother could make.

CHAPTER XXXI.

BELlicosE MOLE.

SOME days after, our old friend, Mole, ventured on deck and met the little Frenchman.

"My name is Isaac Mole, sir, at your service."

"And I am called Hypolite Potiron, monsieur, your *très humble serviteur*."

And they exchanged bows.

The Frenchman was as full of motion as the dancing barber.

Mr. Mole bowed with the grace of a Chesterfield, in

spite of a certain stiffness caused by the rigidity of his wooden member.

"We can congratulate ourselves, sir, upon having given those wretches a wholesome lesson," said Mr. Mole.

Happy Mole!

He was under the impression, as he spoke, that he had materially contributed to their success.

Already he forgot the painful sensations he had experienced during the action, and how he had sought comfort and consolation under the bedclothes with Mrs. Mole in their berth.

He humbugged himself no less than his hearer.

And that was saying something.

"I haven't given those rascals such a lesson, monsieur," said Mr. Mole, "not for years."

"Truly, sir."

"A fact, sir."

"Have you ever had the disagreeable honour of fighting ze pirate before, sare?"

"Fighting!" echoed Mr. Mole, with a withering look at the Frenchman. "I see you do not know me so well as the war offices of all nations do."

And then he was buried in silent reflection for several minutes, as if mentally fighting his battles o'er again.

"Fighting, monsieur!" he went on; "why, the action in which I commanded was, perhaps, the hottest on record."

"Indeed, sare!"

"A fact, sir."

"The pirates must have been *nombreux*—numbrous, what you call—dat is frequent."

"Numerous, you mean, Monsieur Potiron," suggested the tutor.

"Ah, yes."

"Well, of course."

"Great odds, as you say."

"Forty to one," returned Mr. Mole, unblushingly.

"*Morbleu!*"

"Yes, sir; and I fought eighteen of them single-handed, and in fact, I may mention that I was more embarrassed by the bodies of the slain which I piled up around me than by all else. Two hours and a quarter of mortal strife went on, and I smote them hip and thigh."

"On the hip and on the thigh? How could you, sare, always strike in ze same places?"

Mr. Mole replied by a supercilious smile.

"A figure of speech, my friend," he said; "they fell before my arm like ripe corn before the sickle. One of them shot me through the breast. I had two sabre cuts on the head, and I lost this leg in that fight."

"Vat a great man!" cried the little Frenchman, in profound admiration.

"You flatter me," said the diffident Mole.

"You must be a very great personage in England," said Monsieur Potiron.

Mr. Mole smiled complacently.

"Well, yes, history will record my deeds."

"*Mais si*—yes; a great *capitaine*."

"Well," said Mr. Mole, "I must confess that my little feats were much talked about in England."

"Your little feats? You mean, sare, ze one you have lose?"

Mr. Mole looked puzzled at this.

He could not fathom M. Potiron's meaning for a while.

But presently it dawned upon him.

"I see your mistake, monsieur," he said; "I don't mean feet—not f-double-e-t, but feat—f-e-a-t—a deed of daring, in this instance."

"Oh-h-h, I see!" exclaimed the Frenchman.

"Yes," pursued Mr. Mole; "I was known for a long while as Mole the Bold Buccaneer."

"Truly?"

"Yes."

"Mole ze Buccaneer."

"Mole the Bold Buccaneer," continued the tutor, calmly; "by others I was known as Mole the Avenger—some called me Mole the Pirates' Terror."

Monsieur Potiron stepped back to take a long look of deep admiration at the disinterested Mole, who was so condescending as to relate his own glories for his (Potiron's) special edification.

There was no mistaking the wild, extravagant admiration which the little Frenchman had for Isaac Mole from that moment.

Continentalers are more given to gesticulating than we

islanders, and Monsieur Potiron expressed as much with a shrug and a grimace as Mr. Mole could have done in a long speech.

"I know now, sare," said he, after a moment's reflection.

"Know what?" demanded Mr. Mole.

"Why ze pirate have done so little when we engage him."

"Do you? Why?"

"Dey have hear that you were on board."

"Likely enough," returned the tutor.

"It is sure."

"It would not surprise me," said Mr. Mole, "for it has been my lot to see a villanous pirate once strike his colours without so much as firing a shot when I summoned him to surrender."

"Nevare."

"Fact, sir."

"And what did you to them, vid de pirates?"

"Hung 'em up to our yardarm; seven of a row, sir, as I'm a sinner."

"*Extraordinaire!*" exclaimed M. Potiron.

"So you'd have said if you had only seen our crew. Why, sir, they were twenty to one, and carried forty guns, while we hadn't so much as a howitzer."

"What is he, howitzer, Monsieur Mole?"

"A small gun, a little cannon. The pirate chief was a desperate fellow, over six feet high, and big in proportion. He did all he could to make his men fight, but they were demoralised."

"By your great name?"

"Yes."

"Oh!"

"Well, sir, he seemed to think himself hardly done by, so I thought I would give him a chance."

"It was too generous of you, sare."

"Perhaps, but then I always respect courage."

"I could not hang him in cold blood with the rest, so I challenged him to single combat."

"*'Cré nom d'une pipe!*" ejaculated Monsieur Potiron; "vat a hero it is—and you did fight?"

"Yes, he was a tough customer."

"He chose to fight with swords, cutlasses.

"We fought for an hour and a half.

"I ran him through the body five times," said Mole, flourishing his umbrella, "but he would not give in, so I was forced to cut him to bits literally.

"A most remarkable man.

"He saluted me as he fell, covered with wounds, and his last words were a compliment to me—an undeserved compliment, I may say."

"No, no."

"Indeed it was."

"And vat said ze pirate to ze brave Monsieur Mole?"

Mr. Mole coughed, and after a moment's reflection said—

"The last words of the pirate chief were—'*Honour to the brave Mole.*'"

"Allew me ze distinguished honour, Monsieur Mole," said the Frenchman, with a most elaborate bow, "to take your hand. It is a privilege most *distingué*. I felicitate the greatest warrior the world has seen since my father was in the world."

"Your father!"

"Yes."

"Was he a great soldier?"

"What, sare! Is it possible dat you do not know my father!"

"I regret to say I did not."

"He was the great rival of Bonaparte."

"Dear, dear!" exclaimed Mr. Mole, "that carries us back a very long way."

"*Certes*—assuredly. My father won his fame by his bravery, Monsieur Mole. Not by scheming, as de oder did. Dey was at ze bataille of Marengo togezer. Ze bataille was lose."

"Lost."

"Lost. *Oui*—lost but for my fader—father I mean. At the head of ten men he stood the charge of a whole wing of the enemy's army—five thousand!"

Mr. Mole opened his eyes at this.

When not lying himself, he was keenly alive to the ridicule of wild exaggeration in others.

"Ten men!"

"Ten, sare."

"Your father was a corporal, then, I suppose."

"No, sare; he was a general and maréchal of France."

"And a general commanding ten men!" repeated Mr. Mole, in some disgust.

"Come, I say, monsieur, don't you think you are mistaken about the general details?"

"No, sare."

"You must be."

Monsieur Potiron looked as fierce as a maggot.

"I don't mistake, sare, and I can prove it at the point of my sword to any body."

Mr. Mole coughed.

He had not expected quite so fierce a retort.

"I wonder," thought he to himself, "if he really means it, or if he is only trying to bounce me."

He thought he would test it.

So he put on a swagger.

"I know much about the point of the sword, Monsieur Potiron," he said, "and I am acquainted with pistols."

"Ah!"

"I can snuff a candle at eighteen paces."

"Oh!"

"I can toss up a glove and cut out the thumb before it reaches the ground."

"Never!"

"A fact, sir," answered Mr. Mole, modestly.

"Or I can spot every pip on the nine of hearts, every shot."

"Dat is vat I call ver' good shooting, sare."

"Well, it isn't to say bad."

"No, *parbleu!* you must be a man to fear."

"No, not to fear," said Mr. Mole. "I manage to inspire respect by keeping myself in good practice, that's all; ever since I winged those three men in the trenches."

"Three!"

"Yes!"

"Vat! all together?"

"Yes, it was all at the same affair; in point of fact, I potted them all three, as near as a toucher, simultaneously, and this was how it was done.

"We fought with revolvers; I picked one off, and before they could say Jack Robinson, turned my weapon, and gave the other two the contents of a chamber each."

"Wonderful!"

"Not wonderful," said Mr. Mole; "the fact is, shooting became a science with me."

"*Evidemment*," said, Potiron, "evidently."

"You have never seen my feat of shooting straight up in the air and cutting the bullet with another before it can reach the earth."

Monsieur Potiron gasped again at this.

"You don't mean that I must believe dat?"

"It is a fact, sir."

"Sare," said Monsieur Potiron, looking indignant, "you laugh at me."

"I would not be so rude," replied Mr. Mole, "though I don't wonder at your supposing you were being laughed at."

"Why, sir?"

"You must be used to getting laughed at."

"*Morbleu!*" ejaculated Potiron, ferociously, "you shall answer for dat."

"With pleasure," returned Mr. Mole, cheerfully. "Shall I fetch my pistols?"

"No, sare, ze sword is ze only arm dat a gentleman can fight with."

"Pistols."

"I insist upon ze sword."

"Very good," said Mr. Mole, complacently. "You shall have a sword, and I'll bring up my pair of revolvers. D'ye see?"

"No, sare."

"Oh, yes, you shall quarte and tierce, and thrust away till you are sick, and I'll pepper you."

"Peppare me! '*Cré, nom d'un chien!* Peppare me?"

"Yes, monsieur," said Mole throwing himself into an attitude calculated to inspire the other with awe. "And damme, sir, you will not be the first one I have peppered. So take a Christian man's counsel and go and make your will."

"What?"

"Your will."

"Vill! Vat is vill?"

"Your last dying words."

"Oh!"

The notion appeared to make Monsieur Potiron just a little uncomfortable.

Mr. Mole perceived his advantage.

He swaggered, and looked as terrible as Pistol himself on the field of Agincourt.

"I don't care to make two or three bites at a cherry," said Mole, with his regular military cough. "I shall very soon put you out of your trouble for this wicked world."

The Frenchman could not brag so loud as Mole, and so he had to lower his colours.

He muttered something about meaning no offence, and being sure that the brave Mole was as skilful at the pistol gallery as he averred.

"Only, sare, I wish to express my admiration of you, *voilà tout*. I could not find words to make you comprehend how very much I admire——"

Mr. Mole interrupted him with a patronising wave of the hand and a smile.

"That is enough, monsieur," he said superciliously ; "only I never allow anybody to call my courage in question, for, sir, I am ready to fight any man that does so."

"Of course."

"And my pistols are still at your service if—if you doubt either my narrative or my courage."

"Mr. Mole."

"Hullo !"

Mr. Mole and the Frenchman jumped back, startled half out of their lives.

Just behind them was a large sea chest, and from the rear of this two figures suddenly rose up.

They were Pike and Nabley, the English detectives.

They had been sitting there to rest themselves and compare notes when Mole and Mr. Potiron came up.

"Mr. Mole."

"Mr. Pike ! Godness gracious, how you startled me !"

"Indeed ?"

"Yes, I did not know there was anybody there."

"I want a word with you, if you please."

"With pleasure, Mr. Pike. What is it, pray ?"

"In private, if possible, Mr. Mole."

"Dear me, yes."

So he stepped aside with the detective.

"It is a very unpleasant matter I have come upon, sir," began the detective, with hesitation.

"Nothing wrong, I hope, Mr. Pike?" said Mr. Mole. Pike was silent.

Mr. Mole appealed to Nabley.

But the latter was evidently loth to break the unpleasant intelligence, whatever it was; for he turned aside as well, and his glance fell to the ground while he heaved a faint sigh of commiseration.

"The fact is, sir," said Nabley, "I wouldn't for one have broached this subject if I hadn't happened to overhear a word or two that fell from you just now."

"Ahem," said Mr. Mole, a bit uneasily.

"Nor would I for another, Mr. Mole."

"Will you speak out?" cried Mr. Mole, goaded on now to fierceness.

"Well, then, sir—then—there, Nabley, you tell it, I haven't the heart to."

"The fact is, Mr. Mole," said Nabley, "my friend Pike has come on a very awkward mission. He comes with a message of defiance."

"What?"

"A message of defiance," repeated Nabley.

"A challenge?"

"Yes."

"Goodness me!"

"I thought you would say so," exclaimed Pike.

"Who from?"

"From a fierce American gentleman who thinks himself affronted, and whom nothing can pacify."

"Surely not, Mr. Jefferson?" said Mole. Nabley shook his head.

"No; the gentleman we mean has been confined to his room with a bad cold, but he has now recovered, and feels himself strong enough to fight any three men on board."

"His name, his name!" gasped Mole.

"Well," said Nabley, "his fighting name is Brick."

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Mole, staggering back. "Brick again! Why was a Brick born?"

"You know him?"

"I should think I do."

"Why, he told me he had never seen you, but that you had grossly insulted him."

"I didn't."

"He says you did. Well, it appears that he followed you on board solely for the sake of fighting you and having your life."

"The ruffian !"

"Well, if he doesn't meet you soon in mortal combat, he says he'll shoot you down anywhere he can see you."

"Why, that would be murder."

"Of course ; but he says he has murdered six men, and you will make the seventh—and he likes odd numbers."

"You will not allow him ?"

"To murder you ? No."

"Quite right," said Mr. Mole ; "you are sensible men, both of you, and——"

"And this," said Pike, "is how I propose to obviate all danger of murder."

"Ah," said Mr. Mole, eagerly, "let me hear your plan, dear friend."

"You shall fight him."

"What ?" shouted poor Mole.

"Wait a bit, we shall choose pistols. We are the aggrieved party, and the choice is with us ; we choose pistols."

"Pistols !"

"Yes, revolvers."

"Why ?"

"Can you ask ?"

"Can I ? Of course ; damme, sir, I do," cried Mr. Mole, working himself up into a perfect fever.

"The reason is that you shall get first fire, and wing him. You break his sword arm, you understand ?"

Mr. Mole felt as though all his inner machinery had dropped down a foot.

"That will suit you to a turn," said Pike ; "eh, sir ?"

"But I might not have a steady hand, and miss."

"Not likely."

"No, it is not ; but I might miss my aim and wound him badly."

"So much the worse for him."

Mole winced.

"Ahem, yes."

"Now, supposing," said Pike, "that the Frenchman acts for you ? I'll tell him."

"No, no," ejaculated Mr. Mole, hurriedly ; "not him. See this dreadful Brick for me, Mr. Pike, and say I should prefer our duel to come off when we land."

"He wouldn't believe me, and—hullo, why, here comes Mr. Brick with pistols and swords. My gracious, Mr. Mole, there'll be murder done."

The tutor shot along the deck like a deer, stumped away to his berth, and was seen no more.

* * * * *

It was at first thought by Pike and Nabley that he was going to seek the seclusion of his state room.

But this was a mistake.

Mr. Mole had no intention of doing anything of the kind.

He fully believed that the ferocious Solomon Brick was on board the ship thirsting for his blood.

It seemed probable enough that Pike saw him coming along armed to the very teeth.

At the risk of being considered a coward, he sought refuge in flight, making as quick time as his wooden leg would permit.

He was getting used to his timber support now.

It did not inconvenience him half so much as it had done at first.

Nevertheless, he often worried over it in secret, though he did not allow his friends to notice his grief.

In fact, it was a great calamity to him, in that it made him look ridiculous.

He did not like to be alluded to as old wooden leg, or old timber toes.

It had also affected his nerves somewhat.

Mr. Mole felt that he could not encounter this terrible Brick.

If he had known that Harvey and the others were conjuring up Mr. Brick as a joke, he would have swaggered in his best fashion.

This, however, was hidden from him.

He had not the remotest idea that it was only a phantom Brick.

Dreadfully alarmed, he hurried to the ship's stern.

During the day, he had noticed a small boat floating in her wake and attached to her by a rope.

Another rope dangled from the bulwarks, having knots at intervals for anyone to go down hand under hand.

This boat had been used by one of the officers for fishing in the morning.

The dawn had broken without a breath of wind.

They were becalmed in the Pacific, with a hot sun beating down upon them.

This was just the time for fishing, and the officer in question had the boat lowered, got in, hoisted the little sail, and enjoyed himself for a few hours.

The dead calm had continued all day long.

Those who were weatherwise, had predicted that a breeze would spring up before sundown.

As yet it had not made its appearance.

There was an awning over the after part of the boat; some cushioned seats were displayed near a large locker, and a general air of comfort and retirement pervaded the small craft.

The sail hung lazily against the mast, the tiller moved backwards and forwards as the listless waves struck against it.

Without any hesitation, Mole got hold of the knotted rope and descended into the boat.

He had to be very careful, for if he had come down with a run, he might have stove a hole in the bottom with his wooden leg.

When he landed safely, he went aft, sat down and chuckled to himself.

In his coat pocket he had a bottle, which he produced, also a glass and a flask of water.

Needless to say that the bottle in question contained a liquor known as rum.

He took a drink and sighed deeply, with a satisfied air.

The officer who had been fishing had left his line and bait in the boat.

Mr. Mole baited the hook and cast the line overboard, lighted a manilla cigar, and beamed, positively beamed, with a blissful consciousness that he was safe.

His enemy, Brick could not injure him now.

If he found him out and attempted to enter the boat, the hunted and harassed professor resolved to cut himself adrift.

Rather would he trust himself to the mercy of the waves, than be compelled to face Solomon Brick.

That he was fairly panic-stricken, there could be no doubt.

While he smoked, drank, and thought of calm content, as becomes a gentle angler, he imagined that his retreat had been unobserved.

It was his firm belief that neither Pike nor Nabley had seen where he went.

This was altogether a mistaken idea.

They had followed him at a distance, and were already plotting how they could have some more fun out of him.

"Twig the old cockalorum in the boat," exclaimed Pike.

"I spy," replied Nabley.

"He is making himself comfortable, and no mistake. We shall have to rouse him up a bit."

"How will you do it?"

"I'll go down the rope and join him in the boat," said Pike.

"What then?"

"You must help in the joke. Mole and I will talk, fish, drink and smoke. I intend to sympathise with him, but at the same time I will work him up against Brick."

"Isn't it time to drop it?" asked Nabley.

"Why should we? Mr. Harvey likes it, and Mr. Hark away does not object."

"That's true."

"Old Mole was made to guy," continued Pike.

"Mind you don't give him fits. He might jump overboard and be drowned."

"Would he be any loss?"

"Decidedly yes. I like the old boy. Let him down easy."

"Very well," said Pike. "This is what you have to do: While the learned and erudite professor and I are enjoying our dear selves, you must look over the stern."

"What for?"

"Give an alarm of Brick."

"Oh! I see. All right," answered Nabley, "I'll do it; but if anything serious happens from it, do not blame me."

"What rot!" said Pike, "as if anything could happen."

"I don't know : great things from little causes come. But we must do something for a lark. Life is so awfully monotonous on board ship : no work to do ; can't play cards or read all day. It's too hot to go in for much exertion, so we will play Mole for all he is worth. Make a start."

"I am going to do so," replied Pike.

"Shall I hide?"

"Certainly, bob down under the bulwarks. It won't do to let him see you."

"When am I to chuck a brick—I mean, say that this human Brick is coming?"

"In about five minutes."

"Right ; enough said," answered Nabley.

His companion, Pike, who was agile enough to go down a rope, let himself descend into the boat.

Mr. Mole was fishing diligently.

"Hullo!" exclaimed Pike, "I didn't know you were here, sir."

"Keep it dark, then. What do you want?" asked the professor.

"I was about to have a little fishing."

"Hold your noise ; I've got a bite."

Mole jerked his line and pulled out a large sized fish.

"That is not so bad," he continued. "It makes the third I've hooked."

"Allow me to congratulate you upon your skill."

"Everybody knows I am a good fisherman. If Isaac Walton were alive, he would not be in it with me."

"Boasting again," remarked Pike.

"I have a right to brag when I can do a thing well. Take this line, Mr. Pike, and see if you can catch one of the finny tribe."

"With pleasure. What are they?"

"Sun-fish—something like our English bream—shy fellows, and no fight in them."

"Indeed?"

"Ah! If you want sport," added Mole, "you should go in for sharks or whales."

"Did you ever catch a whale?"

"Thousands of them, when I was in Labrador."

"I was not aware that you ever had been in such high latitudes."

"You don't know everything. Where have I not been? All over the world, I reckon."

"Great man," replied Pike.

"You may well say that. Great men are never thoroughly appreciated until they are dead."

Pike took the line from Mole and began to fish; but he had no luck at all.

Not a bite could he obtain.

The fish were off the feed, or he was singularly clumsy.

"Where's that fellow Brick?" asked Mole, into whose head the rum was getting.

"Gone below, I think. He could not find you, so he made himself scarce."

"What did the low ruffian say?"

"Simply that he meant to have it out with you."

"He is welcome to do so at any appointed time. I am ready to meet him; but the affair must be arranged in a regular manner: seconds, and all that kind of thing, you know."

"Certainly. That is only fair."

"If the low, bellicose scoundrel talks to me, I shall knock him down."

"No, I would not do that," said Pike.

"Why not?" asked Mole.

"He has two legs, you have only one. Don't you see that you would be placed at a disadvantage?"

Mole uttered a groan.

"Yes," he rejoined, "I am a cripple. Everyone taunts me with my misfortune."

"I didn't mean it that way."

"Why can't this infernal half-baked Brick let me alone?"

"He's terribly vindictive."

"So am I when I am roused. Bless me, let him beware! I will pulverise this lump of cooked clay, this Brick out of a kiln."

"Don't talk so loud," said Pike.

"I will not hold my tongue for anyone," responded Mole.

"He might hear you."

"I am prepared for him. There will be murder on the high seas, if he dares to interfere with me."

"Look out! I fancy I hear his voice," said Pike, put-

ting his hand to his ear, and assuming a listening attitude.

"Keep him away from me. I shall do him a mischief."

"Or he you?"

Suddenly Nabley appeared at the stern of the ship.

"Below!" he cried.

"Ahoy!" answered Pike.

"Have you seen Mole? He is not on board. Brick is coming."

"The gentleman is in the boat. I came down to have some fishing, and found him here."

"Tell him to look out. Brick swears he will have his life."

"All right. I'll warn him."

"Here he is; he has heard me. I'm afraid he will come down into the boat," answered Nabley.

Mole got up from his seat and took a knife from his pocket. He turned pale under his sunburnt skin.

"I'll be bothered if he comes here. I—I don't want to calcine this Brick. I pity the poor fool, and therefore I will sever the rope," he said.

"Do what?" asked Pike.

"Cut the boat adrift."

"Are you mad?"

"Perhaps I am. You are all trying to make me so."

Saying this he stumped forward and, before Pike could stop him, cut the rope.

The tide was running quickly, and in a minute, the form of the ship began to rapidly recede.

There was a current, apparently, which was carrying them away.

"Help, help!" exclaimed Pike.

"Put your sail up!" shouted Nabley.

"What's the use without any wind?" replied Pike.

"You will be lost."

"I know it. The madman has done it on purpose."

A dense mist began to rise from the sea.

This is a very frequent occurrence in those latitudes.

In less than five minutes, the boat containing Mr. Mole and Pike, was out of sight.

Nabley's shouts brought Harkaway and Harvey on deck.

They had been enjoying a siesta in the cabin.

"What the deuce are you making all this hullabaloo about?" enquired Harkaway.

"We've carried the joke too far, sir," replied Nabley.

"Explain yourself."

"Mr. Harvey started it about Solomon Brick, with Mr. Mole."

"And you have carried it on?"

"Well, Pike and I took a hand in it, just now. Mole got into the boat which was riding astern. Pike went after him. I said Brick was coming, and Mole cut the painter."

"Where are they?"

"Adrift in the mist."

"Good heaven!" cried Harvey, "they will be lost."

"I fear so," replied Harkaway. "The captain told me there was a storm brewing."

"Just so. A calm always precedes it."

"What is to be done?"

"Hanged if I know!"

The three men looked at one another.

It was certainly an awkward predicament for Mole and Pike to be placed in.

There were other boats on board the ship.

To lower them, however, in the mist would be worse than useless.

"I am really very sorry I started on Mole, now," remarked Harvey. "He will be drowned, and I should not like to lose him."

"Nor I," Jack answered, feelingly. "He has been my friend—I may say, our friend—Dick, from boyhood."

"That's true."

"And, with all his faults, we like him."

"I do and always did; but, for the life of me, I can't help chaffing him sometimes."

"It's just the same with me," replied Jack.

Nabley coughed, as if to hide some emotion.

"I will chip in for self and partner," he said. "We have no ill-feeling towards the old gentleman."

"How to find and save them is the question," continued Jack. "Here we are, becalmed in a mist."

"It may lift, sir. I hope it will, for Pike's sake."

"We can do nothing at present," added Jack. "When

the wind rises the fog will clear off; and then we must cruise about and try to pick up the castaways."

"That won't be so easy as you think," observed Harvey.

"Do you mean that we shall have to say good-bye to poor old Mole and the clever Mr. Pike?"

"It strikes me very forcibly that we shall."

"Confound the luck! That is what comes of practical joking. Mole was driven mad."

"There is no doubt of that, or he would not have cut himself adrift. It is all my fault," said Harvey.

"I have lost my son, and now I have lost the tutor," replied Jack.

"Let us hope that we shall recover both of them."

"It is a puzzle. All we can do is to stand by and search the ocean when we get some wind."

"There is a capful coming!"

"So there is, Dick," exclaimed Harkaway. "Look! the mist is rising. We shall have a bellyful of it, as the sailors say, in a few minutes."

"Good luck, my boy! We'll find Mole, if possible," Harvey answered.

The wind had come at last.

It was rapidly dissipating the fog.

The captain and the crew were soon at work hoisting a spread of canvas, and all was bustle and activity.

CHAPTER XXXII.

ADrift ON THE OCEAN WAVES.

WHEN the boat drifted away with the current, Pike searched for some oars.

He was unable to find any.

Rushing to the mast, he seized the halliards and hoisted the sail.

It flapped idly against the mast, for there was no wind.

Then the mist rose with appalling suddenness, and he glared viciously at Mole.

The latter had lighted a fresh cigar, and, sitting down comfortably, was sipping his rum and water.

"You've done a fine thing. Think you've scored this time, don't you?" exclaimed Pike.

"What's the matter?" asked Mole.

"We're adrift, you old idiot! A fog has enveloped us."

"Better that than I should be massacred. I've done Brick. As I said before, why was a Brick born?"

"We shall starve, get drowned, or captured by pirates, or perhaps be eaten by sharks."

"I care not," answered Mole. "A man can only die once."

"In that case, why did you not fight Solomon Brick?"

"That might have been a sudden death, and I like to take my time about every thing."

"Dolt!"

"Call me names. I tell you I am reckless. The persecution I have been subjected to has been too much for me."

"Then you are mad!"

"Just as mad as the proverbial hatter."

Pike groaned in agony of spirit.

He could not see the end of this adventure, and he ardently wished he was on board ship again.

"I don't care if we drift to the North Pole, or get chucked on a desert island," continued Mole.

"Or swallowed by a whale," suggested Pike.

"That's better than being bitten by a *pike* like you. Oh, you fresh water shark!"

"Why, I'm your friend."

"Yes, you are—just as much as a hawk is to a bird," replied Mole.

"If I get you on a desert island, you pumpkin headed old donkey, I'll try and knock some sense into you, and, as this sea is full of small, and to some extent, uninhabited islands, there is a chance of it."

"Man, I despise you. Savages respect me, but you don't!"

"I don't know what is to become of us," groaned Pike.

"Make your miserable life happy, as I am doing."

"Not a bad idea. Pass the grog."

"Help yourself, and welcome. Don't take too much," said Mole, with an anxious look.

"Certainly not. Drink fair, is my motto."

He poured out a good half tumbler full and drank it down at a draught.

"Hand that bottle back. You've had enough," said the professor.

"All right! Here you are."

Mr. Mole repossessed himself of his cherished bottle.

He hugged it to his breast with affection.

"Your only friend, eh?" remarked Pike.

"Let us hold in our arms those we love in our hearts," said Mole, sentimentally.

"Wouldn't it be nice if there was a grog-shop, or floating public-house, anchored every couple of miles on the ocean," observed Pike.

"First-class idea! Patent that."

"As commerce increases, and if there were many passengers like you, it would pay."

"Like the bank, sir. I'm proud of you, I am indeed."

At this moment, a large wave struck the boat.

It careened to port, instantly.

Before it righted itself, Mole fell off the thwart on his back.

His bottle was broken.

Its precious contents were spilled in the bottom of the boat.

"Oh, dear! I'm done for," he shouted. "The doctors all said that I should never travel without a drop of rum, to be used medicinally."

He was lying on his back, with his wooden leg cocked up in the air at an angle of thirty-five degrees.

"Get up. Don't lie like that, you ninny."

"It sounds well in you to call me names."

"Why shouldn't I, when you deserve it?" asked Pike.

"Confound such lubbers!" cried Mole. "Didn't you turn the boat broadside on that wave?"

"I didn't touch the tiller. I don't know how to manage a boat. It isn't in my line. If you are so clever, why don't you take the helm?"

"So I can. Do you suppose I can't handle a cockleshell of a craft such as this? Assist me to rise, as you ought to."

"I'll help you do anything if you won't make a show and exhibition of yourself."

"In return," said Mole, "I will teach you to reef and

steer, to clew up ten thousand topsail short blocks, to splice the mainbrace, to splinter the jibboom and—and to shiver your timbers generally, as becomes a man-of-war's man."

"All that in once!" laughed Pike.

"Hoist the Union Jack! Let fly the Blue Peter! Fire a royal salute, and prepare to receive the port admiral!"

"Who's he?"

"Your humble servant, Isaac Mole, K.C.B.," was the reply.

Pike gave the Professor a hand.

He was soon sitting on the thwart again.

Stretching forth his hand to get hold of the tiller, he made a discovery.

The door of a large locker flew open, displaying to the delighted gaze of the professor a store of good things.

There was, to begin with, what turned out to be a gallon of rum in a stone bottle, a bag of biscuits, various canned meats, a good-sized keg of fresh water, a ham boiled and just cut, and a couple of chickens.

These had been destined for the captain's table, but the officer who had been fishing bribed the steward to let him have them.

He had intended to go out again the next day, and left the provisions in the locker, so that he could start at an early hour if the calm continued.

"Here's a find!" cried Mole, uncorking the rum.

"Corn in Egypt," said Pike, quite as pleased.

"Balm in Gilead," continued the professor.

"Rum on the ocean."

"It will soon be rum in the stomach. It's very rum altogether; but, thank our stars, we shall not starve. Shake hands, old fellow. You're not such a bad sort, after all."

They made up their dispute, enjoyed an excellent repast, lighted cigars, and talked the situation over.

One thing was agreed on between them.

They must stick together for mutual preservation.

The boat would require careful handling.

A squall, in that treacherous sea, might overtake them at any moment, and capsize their frail boat.

The result of their confabulation, was that they agreed to keep watch and watch.

The watches were to be of four hours' duration each, and as they were both possessed of time-keepers, there could be no mistakes.

Pike consented to take the first watch.

He hoisted the sail, took the rudder, and guided the boat before the waves.

Feeling the want of sleep, Mole made himself as comfortable as he could on some tarpaulin at the bottom of the boat.

He was soon fast asleep.

Pike continued to sail the boat.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

LAND HO !—LIFE ON AN ISLAND—A STRANGE ADVENTURE.

PIKE steered the boat until his watch was up.

When, according to agreement, he roused Mr. Mole.

Having no nautical knowledge, and being without a compass, he did not know in what direction they were going.

He was simply sailing before the wind, as it is called.

Possibly, he might be nearing the China Coast, but it was just as probable that he was travelling towards the South Pole. His mind was ill at ease.

The provisions they had so luckily, we may almost say providentially, found in the locker, would not last them many days.

If they did not fall in with some vessel which would pick them up, they must starve.

In addition to this contingency, there was the danger of meeting with a storm or tempest.

Their little barque would soon be capsized.

In Pike's opinion, there were sharks about, and he was not in reality mistaken.

Scarcely had he roused Mole than there was a strange sound in the air.

It was early morning.

The sun had risen about half-an-hour.

The noise was made by a quantity of flying fish.

At least a dozen fell into the boat, the others shooting over it.

"What's roused those beggars?" asked Pike.

"Can't you see?" replied Mole.

He pointed to the ocean.

The horrible form of a large shark was to be seen.

It had perhaps been following in their wake all night.

"Shark, eh? I thought as much," said Pike. "Those creatures always make my flesh creep."

Mr. Mole smiled contemptuously.

"It seems to me that it doesn't take much to upset your nervous system," he remarked. "There is no harm in sharks when you get used to them."

"How is that to be accomplished?" inquired Pike.

"Tame them. Once, when I lived near the sea, I had a pond constructed to hold six fine sharks. I used to feed them liberally on pigs, horses, cows, dead donkeys, an occasional live nigger or two, and——"

"Draw it mild!" interrupted Pike.

"Fact, I assure you."

"Take your oath to it, I suppose?"

"Make an affidavit and kiss the book," replied Mole, with imperturbable solemnity.

"You'll do!"

"What do you mean, sir?"

"You ought to get on; you do try."

"Mr. Pike, do you mean to insinuate that I am romancing?" asked the professor.

"Wire in and get your name up to date."

"I am telling you a shark story. If you don't want to listen to it, say so. If you do, haul in your slack, as the sailors phrase it."

"Pile it on."

"I suppose that is your elegant way of telling me to proceed with my narrative?"

"That's about the size of it. Keep it up."

"Well, these sharks got to know me. They would come to the side of the pond when I whistled them, and actually extend their fins for me to touch, as if we were shaking hands."

"That takes it!" cried Pike.

"What?"

"The cake. You're the champion! I'll give you the belt."

"Do you doubt my veracity?"

"Oh, dear, no! I believe every word of your story, over the left," replied Pike.

"You are an extremely rude, ill-bred person."

"Excuse me. I must speak my mind."

"I treat your ignorance with contempt—yes, sir, with the contempt it merits."

"Thank you. I am grateful for small favours."

"All the same," continued Mole, "I shall go on with my shark story. Now I have commenced, I will not be put down by vulgar clamour."

"I apologise. It sha'n't occur again."

"That is the way to speak to a gentleman of my acknowledged powers."

"Score one."

"What do you mean, sir, by your interruptions and interpolations?"

"Happy thought! Book it."

"Do you intend to convey that I am not telling the truth?"

"What price, Ananias?"

"Sir, that is an insult! Ananias was the prince of liars. The Baron Munchausen came very near beating him, but at weight for age, Ananias remains the master."

"Go on: I'm listening."

"Were it not for the fact that I should be alone in this boat if I threw you to the sharks, I'd do it," said Mole.

"Where should I be while you were trying it on?"

"In my arms—compressed by muscular power—hurled into the sea, like chaff to the winds!"

"You—not me," replied Pike.

"Be silent, if you want me to conclude, and do not, my good fellow, allow yourself to be carried away by the exuberance of your own verbosity. Now pay attention."

"I will endeavour to do so."

"It is about the only thing, I am told, that you detective men ever do pay. You pay attention to your orders, but you never pay your debts—unprincipled vagabonds. However, let us return to our sharks," said Mole.

"First of all, you must retract."

"I never take anything back."

"Oh! You must, or I'll paste you. Didn't you call me a vagabond?"

"Ah! yes. I used the word, but not personally."

"How is that?"

"I was talking of the detective force generally, and not indicating you in particular."

Mr. Mole had always a clever way of getting out of a difficulty.

Seeing that he had pacified his companion, who was inclined to be irascible, he proceeded.

"I always did like you, Pike, and should be very sorry to fall out with you," he observed.

"Don't rub me the wrong way, then."

"Certainly not. Your feathers shall not be ruffled by me. I will coach you in such a way that you shall become as tame, docile, and subservient as my sharks."

"What did they do?"

"I got them into such a state of perfection, that they allowed me to draw their teeth. After which, I used to bathe amongst them, ride on their backs, and——"

"Drop it!" Pike interrupted. "I can't stand any more of it. Take the tiller and let me sleep it off."

"If you allude to my yarn——"

"Turn it up, governor. I'm tired," protested Pike.

He threw himself down on the tarpaulin that Mole had vacated.

Lying on his side, he pulled his hat over his eyes, and was quickly in the land of dreams.

"It takes a lot to convince some people," remarked Mole. "That man doesn't believe my shark story. He is a sceptic. I can see it in his unbelieving face. A prophet is ever without honour in his own country. I will tell him an untrue story next time. It shall be a snake story, and—ha! ha!—a whopper."

Laughing to himself, the professor took a piece of rope and lashed the tiller hard-a-lee.

He liked to save himself trouble if he could, and as it was breakfast-time, he thought he would take the edge off his appetite.

Some canned salmon and corned beef, with biscuit and a little rum and water, satisfied him.

As the little boat darted over the crest of the waves, he, as his companion had been doing, reflected upon the situation in which they were placed.

Being of a sanguine disposition, he did not despair.

During his travels with Harkaway, he had been placed in many awkward positions.

Yet he had managed to come out all right at the end.

After sailing for a couple of hours, he saw something on the verge of the horizon.

It looked to him like land.

He strained his eyes, and gazed in great excitement, until he made out the form of a tree.

In a few minutes he distinctly saw more trees.

Pike was still sleeping soundly.

The professor did not wake him up, as he knew that he needed rest.

Altering the course of the boat, Mole steered for the island.

For such he supposed it to be.

He knew that they could not be within hundreds of miles of the mainland.

Keeping on for a few hours, he beheld a low-lying shore.

It was well wooded.

His delight knew no bounds.

He could contain himself no longer.

Within a mile was a lovely island, which promised them an asylum.

Far better was that than being buffeted about in an open boat.

Going up to Pike, he shook him by the arm.

"Wake up!" he cried.

"What's the matter now?" asked Pike, rubbing his eyes. "Has the shark got aboard? If so, you'd better better tame him."

"Land ho!" exclaimed Mole.

"By Jingo! That is good news."

"See for yourself, if you don't believe me."

Pike sprang up, and looking in the direction indicated, discovered what appeared to be land in the distance. With feelings similar to what the Israelites of old may be supposed to have felt with regard to the Promised Land, he caught Mole by the hand, shaking it heartily.

"Bravo!" he said. "We are saved. Let the wind blow and send us along gaily."

"If it is a desert island, we shall be all right," Mole answered; "but if there are savages on it, look out!"

"Don't talk about savages."

"We must look facts in the face."

"My dear Mr. Mole, you are conjuring up dangers. Don't, please don't, meet danger half-way."

"We will hope for the best," replied Mole; "but I have been wrecked in these seas, and I dread the worst."

The wind increased in volume, and the boat rapidly drew near the island.

Its aspect became more pleasing and agreeable the nearer they got to it.

They could see monkeys on the ground and on the branches of the trees.

Parrots, and other gaudily plumaged birds flew about, and the imposing red, white, and blue cockatoo was not absent.

At length, the yawl beached herself upon the sand.

The tide was low, and they noticed a quantity of shell-fish.

Some resembled clams, others were oysters, and there was a variety of the crab species.

Stepping out, the two men gave vent to a burst of joy.

It was such an unspeakable relief to get on dry land once more.

"Hurrah!" cried Mole. "This, I expect, is an island. I will name it."

"What are you going to call it?" asked Pike.

"I suppose you would like it to be known to posterity as Pikeland?"

"Yes, that sounds all right."

"Does it? Moleland sounds better."

"You always place yourself first. That's the worst of you."

"Why shouldn't I?" replied Mole. "I am a rarity."

"By Jove, you are!"

"You will never look upon my like again."

"Not much!"

"I am the kind of human article, sir, which, once gone, is remarkably hard to replace."

"So I should think."

"Men similar to you Pikes, are as common as blackberries; but Moles, if you want the genuine article up to date, are very rare."

"Quite unique, I suppose?"

"That is the word. Now, sir, allow me to welcome you to the newly discovered territory, Moleland."

"I thought it was a little bit of an island just now?"

"Not it. I wouldn't discover an island."

"What then?"

"It's a new continent. I feel satisfied it is. Why, sir, do you imagine for a moment that I, Professor Mole, B. A. and M. A., that is to say (to enlighten your ignorance) Batchelor of Arts and Master of Arts, of Oxford University, would condescend to discover any tract of land less than a continent?"

"It's rather a large order," answered Pike.

"Did Columbus go about discovering paltry, dirty, insignificant little islands?"

"Certainly not."

"Nor shall I. This is a gigantic, colossal, stupendous discovery."

"I am glad to hear it."

"Oh, you little think that I am opening up a new continent to civilization. It will be an outlet for the teeming millions of Europe—the safety valve which will save our brethren from overcrowding in slums and starving in a period of agricultural distress."

Pike touched him on the shoulder.

"If you want to make a speech, deliver an oration, or write an article for a newspaper. Don't you think you had better postpone it for a more fitting occasion?"

"Perhaps I had. We will take a drink to christen the new continent called Moleland. After which, we will explore."

"Right you are. Beach the boat."

This advice of Pike's was necessary, because, if they had left the yawl where she grounded, the tide would have later on taken her away.

They could not afford to lose their boat.

At some future time, and perhaps at no remote date, they would want to leave Moleland, as the professor had termed it in his comical and consequential manner.

When the boat was hauled up in safety, they indulged in a glass of rum and water.

A walk inland revealed the fact that the place was extremely fertile.

Cocoanuts, grapes, bananas and pineapples grew in great profusion almost everywhere.

In the distance they could see a range of hills.

From these, which formed the watershed of what subsequently proved to be one of the small islands of volcanic origin, so frequently met with in the Pacific Ocean, a stream of pure sweet water flowed to the sea.

High up on the beach were pieces of wood.

These were portions of wreckage.

Showing that some ship had, at some time or other, been cast upon the shore in a tempest.

A little farther on they came upon some skeletons.

These formed part of the crew.

Turning away from the ghastly relics, they walked along the shore.

Rounding a corner which was covered with palm trees, they sighted a ledge of rocks.

Here were thousands of birds of the gull kind.

They were so tame that the men were able to knock them down with their hands.

"This doesn't look like an inhabited island," remarked Mole.

"I thought it was a continent," replied Pike.

"That's what I mean. If men exist here, the birds are wonderfully tame."

"I should imagine it is deserted."

"Looks to me," continued Mole, "like a shore that Captain Kidd or Paul Jones would have selected to hide his plunder in."

"A treasure island?" asked Pike.

"That is precisely what I mean."

"You may be right. If there is a buried treasure here, I hope we may find it."

"We'll have a try, for it strikes me very forcibly that we shall have nothing to do for a long time to come."

"Worse luck, that's true," answered Pike.

"Heigho!" added Mole, pathetically. "It's rough, but it's got to be borne."

The only chance of their quitting this island, seemed to consist in attracting the notice of a passing ship in some way.

It might be done by a burning beacon at night, or it might possibly be accomplished by hoisting a kind of flag in the daytime.

Searching among the rocks for oysters and crabs, on which they intended to make their morning meal, they discovered a cave.

The aperture in the rock which gave admittance to it was very small.

It was necessary to stoop in order to enter. The dimensions were not spacious.

In formation it was long and narrow, and, strange to say, well lighted and ventilated by a hole in the rock at the extremity.

This formed a sort of natural window.

It overlooked the sea at a height of twelve feet at high water.

"This cave must be ours," cried Mole.

"Let us go and look out at the end. I can't see very plainly, for the half light dazzles me," replied Pike.

They advanced together.

An extraordinary surprise awaited them.

Never had they been more startled or astonished in their lives.

The end of the cave was fitted up and furnished as a bed and sitting-room.

All the articles had, by the look of them, been taken from a ship.

There was a bedstead and bedding, two deal tables, a chest of drawers, two book-cases filled with books, cooking utensils, china, knives and forks, a carpet and a rug.

It was a rough civilization in the wilds of Nature.

There was also a variety of bottles and jars, which, on being examined, were found to contain a very fair kind of wine,

In a corner were tobacco leaves and some old black clay pipes.

As well as some new ones made out of corn-cobs.

A shutter of wood had been arranged to fit in the hole in the rock, which served as a window.

This would effectually keep out the wind and rain.

Against the wall a cupboard had been made of deal planks.

Opening it, they found some meat which had been dried in the sun.

It looked like the flesh of deer or antelope, but tasted very well.

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The bed had all the appearances of having been slept in quite recently.

There were two easy-chairs, and two others.

Into one of these, Mole sank with a prolonged whistle.

"What do you think of this?" he enquired.

"It beats every thing," answered Pike. "This island, for such I insist it is, resembles an earthly paradise."

"But it is not an Adamless Eden."

"No. You are correct in that. This cave is a small house. A man lives here. Perhaps more than one."

Mr. Mole held up his hand deprecatingly.

"Heaven forbid," he said. "One is enough for me. One we might conquer. Two would make mincemeat of us."

"What is your opinion, truly and candidly, of what we have seen?"

"This is an island," replied Mole. "Some poor wretch like ourselves has been wrecked or cast away on it."

"Wrecked, I should think," said Pike, "and got these things out of what was left of the ship or washed ashore."

"Very likely."

"And we have by accident penetrated to his cave."

"Perhaps we shall find it to be the lair of a wild man," replied Mole.

"How so?"

"Prolonged solitude and separation from his kind, drives a man mad."

"Heaven protect us!"

"Amen! So say I," exclaimed Mole.

At this moment they were startled by the sound of a footstep at the entrance to the cave.

What could it be?

In a few seconds, a man stepped from the darkness of the entrance into the light.

It was evidently the owner of the cave.

He was a short, elderly man, with long white hair and beard.

His clothes consisted simply of a vest and pantaloons, made out of the sail of a ship.

He had tied them together by the aid of some fibrous material.

In his hand he held a large watermelon, which looked ripe and luscious.

Directly he beheld the intruders on his privacy, he uttered a loud cry.

The melon fell from his grasp.

He had a band or girdle of leather round his waist.

In this was a sailor's knife.

Snatching it from its resting-place, he brandished it in the air.

Mole and Pike drew their revolvers.

It was an anxious moment.

Would it be best to kill the old man, or let him alone?

That was the question.

It could only be answered by the attitude assumed towards them by the old man himself.

Suddenly he dropped his knife, and fell on his knees before them, holding up his hands.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE OLD MAN OF THE CAVE.

LOOKING reassuringly at the old man, of whose cave he had taken such unceremonious possession, Mr. Mole exclaimed—

“Do not be afraid of us. We have no desire to do you any harm, if you are friendly towards us.”

“I thought you were going to kill me,” replied the cave-dweller, in English, with a north country accent.

“Why should we?”

“My cave and the stores and the little comforts that I have, are worth coveting; but you shall share all with me.”

“That is generous. Get up. Shake hands, and tell us who you are and how you came here,” said Mole.

“First of all, let me know whom I have the honour of entertaining.”

“Certainly. I am the great Mole, Professor of Oxford University—a man known all over the world for his learning. This is my friend, Mr. Pike, connected with the detective department, Scotland Yard. We were cast away in a small boat, and drifted to this land.”

The old man poured them out some wine of his own making.

Then said he—

“My name is Dick Dormer. I was first mate of the *Blue Bell*, of Sunderland. We were wrecked on this island seven years ago. I alone was saved.”

“So long as that!” remarked Mole.

“Ay, it seems like a lifetime to me. I had almost forgotten my own language.”

“How big is this island?”

“I reckon it to be six miles in length, and about three in width,” answered Dormer.

“Ah, a nice little property,” exclaimed Mole. “I claim it as mine. The name I gave it (Moleland) it shall retain.”

“You are welcome to my share of it,” said Dormer. “I only wish I could get off it.”

“Have you friends in Sunderland?”

“I left a wife and ten children there, when I started on that most unlucky voyage.”

The man was visibly affected by the recollection of his distant family. A tear trembled in his eye.

“Surely you do not expect to stay here for ever?” remarked Pike.

“Yes, sir, I do. This cave will be my grave.”

“Don’t say that; you make me shudder. I’m not an old man, and I shouldn’t like to be confined in Moleland all my life.”

“‘We are monarchs of all we survey,’” observed Mole,—“‘our will there is none to dispute,’ as Cowper sang of Alexander Selkirk, the prototype of Robinson Crusoe.”

“I don’t care about being Crusoeed. I don’t want too much Crusoe, but just enough.”

“How much is that?”

“I could do with a month—no more,” replied Pike.

The old man sighed deeply.

“At first,” he exclaimed, “I used to cherish a hope that a passing ship would take me off.”

“Have you never seen a vessel?” asked Mole.

“Not one, sir, during the whole of the seven years I have been marooned here.”

Mr. Mole pricked up his ears.

He knew enough of nautical life to be aware that to be marooned, was for a man to be placed purposely on a

desert island, as a punishment for some crime he had committed on board his ship.

The officers and crew decline to hand him over to the authorities when they reach port. They prefer to deal summarily with him themselves.

Consequently, they unanimously sentence him to be put on the first desert island they can find.

Here he is left, to live or die, as the case may be.

It is a solitary confinement for life.

This is what sailors call marooning.

Mr. Mole immediately came to the conclusion that Dick Dormer had not told them the whole truth.

He was keeping something back from them.

Not that it mattered much, except that it was as well to know the real character of the man in whose company they were all at once accidentally thrown.

For instance, it would not be well to be the guest of a murderer, and living with him in a lonely cave.

His murderous instincts might break out at any moment.

They might fall victims to his homicidal mania.

"Pardon me," exclaimed Mole, "but I thought you told me that you were wrecked on this desert island?"

"So I was," replied Dormer, snappishly. "How do you think I got here—eh? Swam it?"

"Not exactly, my friend; but just now you said you were marooned here."

"Did I?"

Dormer appeared to be slightly confused.

"Yes. Now, you know, as a sailor, that to be marooned is to be punished by being put off your ship onto a desert island."

"I have heard of it."

"This is the sentence for some dastardly crime. It is worse than hanging or shooting, because it is a living death."

"I have found it so," replied the man, bitterly.

"Are you concealing any thing from us?"

"No, sir. Why should I?"

"But you said that you were marooned, don't you know. I can't forget that," Mole persisted.

"I can't tell how the word got into my head. I have been alone so long, that I get silly at times."

"Have you ever committed a crime?"

"Never!"

With that explanation the professor was obliged to be content, for the present.

The old man of the cave would reveal nothing.

He had, however, aroused some suspicion in the minds of his new friends.

In future they would be doubtful of him.

They noticed his features more carefully than they had hitherto done.

The scrutiny was not at all reassuring.

There was a restless glare in the eyes, and a dogged, vicious binding together of the lips.

Perhaps they judged him harshly, but they did not like the look of him.

"I'm going to tell you," continued Dormer, "how I felt during the first twelve months I was here."

"How did you keep the time?" inquired Mole.

"I knew the day and the month when I set foot here. I made notches in a tree every succeeding day, taking twelve palm trees for twelve months."

"We may call that a novel calendar up to date."

"It has enabled me to count the years of my misery. But to resume. I burnt fires, and hung a flag on a tree, which I denuded of its branches, so as to make it resemble a staff; but there was no response."

"Why is that?"

"Simply because we are out of the trade track."

"By Jingo! that's bad news," cried Mole.

"Could it be worse?" said Pike.

"No ships ever sail within fifty miles of this desolate spot," added Dormer; "so there is no hope for you two men, any more than there is for me. We are here for life—d'ye hear me?—for life."

He grew very excited while he was speaking.

"Is that what your messmates said to you when they put you on the island?" asked Mole.

"Didn't I tell you I was wrecked?" replied Dormer.

"Oh, yes! I had forgotten that. By the way, how did you get these books, this furniture, and kitchen articles?"

"Oh!—hem!" stammered Dormer—"they were washed ashore. That's how I got them."

"You picked them up on the beach?"

"Exactly."

"How do you live?" continued the professor.

Dormer explained that it wasn't necessary in Moleland—he caught on to the name that had been given it—to live upon a vegetarian diet.

In the first place, there was a variety of birds, which could be knocked down by a stick or a stone, without any trouble.

These, although having a slightly fishy taste, were very good eating.

Fish of many kinds could be caught by the hand in the holes in the rocks, at low water, while turtles and turtles' eggs were also to be had.

The eggs of the birds were excellent when they could be got.

Fruit was very plentiful; he had planted corn in patches, which yielded him enough to make his bread.

The corn he pounded in a hole he had made in the rocks, and baked it in an oven of his own construction.

His fuel consisted of dry grass and wood, and being possessed of a flint and steel, he could always get a fire.

Grapes he dried until they were made into raisins, and he was able to manufacture as much wine as he could drink.

But one solace he was deprived of, and that was tobacco, of which not a plant grew on the island.

"Yes," he repeated, "I have lost all hope here. I am, and have been, rotting like a dog in dough."

He moved to the centre of the cave.

Lifting up a board, he revealed a hole, six feet long by two broad, and about two and a half deep.

"What on earth is that?" asked Mole.

"That's my grave, gentlemen," replied Dormer.

"A ghastly idea, isn't it?"

"Maybe," said Dormer, carelessly. "When I feel my end approaching, I shall lie down in that hole. I dug it out with my own hands, only using a chisel and a mallet—dug it out of the solid rock!"

"Let us hope that you will not occupy it."

"No hope—no hope," cried Dormer. "Didn't I tell you that I had abandoned hope for the last six years? And so will you before you have been on this accursed island long. However, you are here, and I will do all I can to make you comfortable."

"That is kind of you," replied Mole; "but I must tell you that I have every expectation of being rescued."

"What makes you think so?" asked Dormer.

"Our ship is not so very far off, and my friend, Jack Harkaway, who can do what he likes on board of her, will not leave these seas until he finds us."

"How can he tell in what direction you have drifted?"

"He will sail here and sail there, until he discovers our whereabouts."

"I trust you will not be mistaken," answered Dormer.

"Make yourselves at home. I will go out and knock down some birds, and catch some fish for our dinner. When I come back, I will light a fire outside."

He nodded to them and went away.

Pike, with the natural instinct of a detective, followed him to the outlet.

He saw him walk along the seashore, until he was lost to sight round a curve in the rocks.

When Pike came back he looked very grave.

Mole was smoking one of the cigars he had left, and applying himself to the fermented grape juice.

"I distrust that man," said Pike.

"So do I," replied Mole.

"There is more in him than appears on the surface. Did you notice how he squirmed—that is the only word—when you tackled him about the marooning?"

"I did, and I made a note of it."

"You may be certain, Mr. Mole, that the man has committed some dreadful crime."

"How does that concern us?"

"He will not scruple to commit another, not he. We shall be his next victims."

"Do you think him mad?" asked Mole.

"Going on that way—he's not right. I, for one, will not sleep in this cave with him," replied Pike.

"It is very comfortable. If we sleep in our boat, or under the trees, it will be rather breezy."

"I said, 'with him.' We have got the cave, and we can keep it."

"What are you going to do with the man, Dick Dormer, as he calls himself?"

"Make him a prisoner."

"Where will you keep him?" inquired Mole.

"That is a puzzler. There is no place to lock him up."

"You are simply a superior sort of policeman," said Mole, "and you are carried away with your police ideas. Let the unfortunate wretch alone."

"But he may kill us in our sleep," urged the detective.

"It is a dilemma. I cannot see my way out of the difficulty. We cannot kill him. What *are* we to do?"

"I give it up."

They sat still, and looked at one another anxiously.

Each revolved different ideas in his mind.

"Oh," cried Mole, at last, "I don't believe the poor fellow will hurt us—he must be glad of our company. And, I say——"

"What, sir?"

"Let us take possession of his knife. There it is on the floor of the cave. He has no other weapon, and we are fully armed."

"How do you know he has nothing else to injure us with?" asked Pike.

"Well, well—that is my idea."

"A man can be killed in his sleep with a piece of rock, or a log of wood."

"True. We must keep watch and watch, as on board ship; and that is a nice thing! It may go on for the rest of our lives. We have no certainty that Harkaway will find us. Dick Dormer is a confounded nuisance. I would to heaven that we had never met with him."

"Same here," replied Pike. "I wish he'd have a sun-stroke, or burst a blood-vessel, or——"

"Never wish anyone evil," Mole interrupted. "It might come home to ourselves."

They became silent for awhile, each one being occupied with his own thoughts.

It was extremely difficult to arrive at a solution of the theory.

"Go after him, and see what he is up to," said Mole, after a time. "I am oppressed with a feeling that there is danger in the air."

"Do you expect to be blown up by dynamite?" asked Pike.

"That's a foolish idea—the old man's got no explosives; but I could see that he wants to get rid of us. He resents

our intrusion upon his island, and our taking possession of his cave."

"You're right. I can see passion and resentment in every lineament of his face."

"As you agree with me in this, perhaps you will be good enough to go and look after the man. Find out something about him; knock him on the head; chuck him into the sea; feed him to a shark; sweep the floor with him—do what you like, only get rid of him. A man who has been marooned by his shipmates is always dangerous."

"You still believe that he has committed a crime?"

"I'm sure of it. He will do us injury, if we don't keep our eyes 'peeled,' as the Yankees say."

"We can't kill the poor old beggar in cold blood," said Pike.

"He would not mind treating us in that way, and as my life isn't insured, I want to take precautions."

"Well, I will tell you what can be done."

"Name it," said Mole.

"Let us make him a captive, and put him in our boat, with a month's supply of grub and fresh water."

"What's the good of that?"

"A lot of good. We shall get rid of him."

"My dear fellow," replied the professor, patronisingly, as he helped himself to another glass of the island wine, "you are what vulgar little boys would call a 'mug.'"

"How do you make that out?"

"Put the man in the boat, start him on his voyage to nowhere, imagine him pursuing his wild career over the stormy ocean, and what will be the result?"

"Perhaps he will make some other land—get picked up by a ship, or perish in a storm."

"Not he. The man's too smart for that. He is a criminal. Does he want to go back to England? No. It is all humbug about his wife and children. The old rascal knows he would be found out by some of his shipmates, and put on his trial."

"What are you driving at, Mr. Mole?"

"I tell you, the old man loves this island. If we put him in the boat, he will tack and come back to it."

"I'll threaten to shoot him on sight, if he does," said Pike.

"That menace might have some effect on him," replied Mole, after some consideration.

"Try my scheme."

"Very well. Let us start out at once and capture him."

"Agreed," cried Pike.

"Treat him like a wild beast."

"Not exactly," replied the detective. "He is not much better, but we will act towards him as I do with a suspected criminal: be firm, but not cruel."

"You do me an injustice," said Mole. "I am as much a humanitarian as you. Do you imagine for a moment that a man in my position, of my social station, of my education and world-wide reputation, could?"

"Do you want to make a speech?"

"I am known from the Malvern Hills to the Andes, from China to Peru, and——"

"Is it you talking, or this island wine?"

"Sir," replied Mole, "your trade is that of a thief-catcher. Manners you have none."

"How about your own——"

"I am an accomplished gentleman, brought up in the school of Lord Chesterfield, and polished off by such members of fashion as Beau Brummel and Count d'Orsay."

"Oh, here's a hall, if you want to spout," cried Pike.

He was entirely out of patience with the garrulous professor, who, whenever he began to talk, never knew when to stop.

Taking hold of him by the arm, in a policeman-like kind of way, as he would have done had he, in his professional capacity, captured a forger, he led him out of the cave.

When they got near the entrance, Mole, who was rather top-heavy, kicked against a small canvas bag, which was lying against the cave wall.

It broke, and at least a hundred bright glittering sovereigns rolled out into the sunshine, which streamed into and illuminated this portion of the cave.

"Money! Gold, by Jingo!" Pike exclaimed.

"So it is," answered Mole; "and I can see some more bags close by—about a dozen. The old man has a treasure here."

"The mystery deepens," replied Pike; "he's an artful old card. It would take a clever man to fathom him."

"What are we? Don't call us duffers."

"Certainly not. I expect we shall be his match in the long run ; but you had better keep away from that grape juice. It makes you unsteady."

Mr. Mole regarded him severely.

"Pike," he said, in a tone of remonstrance, "that's a very unkind and uncalled-for remark."

"Beg pardon, I'm sure."

"I don't like it. I like a drop, I'll admit that. I love a social glass, no matter what the stuff is."

"You're not particular—say, from turps to sour cider."

"Don't be absurd. What I want to ask you is, did you ever see me the worse for liquor?"

"Did I—what?"

Mr. Mole repeated his question.

He followed it up with this remark—

"Do not tell a falsehood to please me, Pike. Tell the plain, straightforward, unvarnished truth. Did you ever——"

"Oh, give us a rest, and come along," interrupted the detective.

He put a little gentle pressure on the professor, and got him outside the cave.

Nothing was to be seen of the old man.

They stood for a minute, looking over the pleasing landscape which was spread out in front of them.

This island in the Pacific Ocean was a veritable paradise.

Suddenly there was a rushing noise over their heads.

Pike seized Mole by the arm, and drew him on one side.

The next instant, a huge piece of rock fell in the very spot where they had been standing.

"What did I say?" cried Mole. "Treachery!"

"No doubt of that," replied Pike.

They turned round and looked up. On the top of the cliff they saw the figure of Dick Dormer.

The height was not very great—possibly twenty-five feet.

When he saw that he was discovered, he moved as if to hide himself.

This intention was frustrated by Pike.

The latter presented a pistol at him.

"What did you cast that rock down for?" asked the detective.

"It was an accident ; it slipped," replied Dormer.

"That won't do for me. Come down here, or I fire."

"You will kill me. Have some mercy on a poor helpless old man."

"You are not so helpless as you want to make out. We will not harm you, though. You can come down in safety."

"Will you swear that?" asked Dormer.

Pike gave him the required assurance, and he commenced the descent by a narrow path.

Pike and Mole watched the owner of the cave carefully as he came down from the rocky height.

He was covered by Pike's pistol all the time.

At the least attempt to evade them, he would have been fired at.

In a few minutes he stood before them.

"Old man," exclaimed Pike, sternly, "you have deceived us. It was your proposal to go and cater for us in the dinner line, as well as you could. Instead of that, you climb up to the top of the cave, lie in ambush, and when you see us come out, hurl a huge rock at our heads."

"It is a mercy we were not crushed as flat as pancakes," put in Mr. Mole.

"Mercy, sir! I call it a miracle—a direct intervention of Providence on our behalf."

"It was an attempt to murder."

"According to the laws of civilised nations, what is that crime punishable by?" asked Pike.

"Death," replied Mole.

"Right. And I think we shall be justified in becoming the executioners of this man."

"For the sake of self-preservation, we shall," said Mole.

"What shall it be?"

"What do you mean?"

"The cord or the bullet?" answered Pike.

"Oh, I beg your pardon. I did not understand. I am a little dull of comprehension to-day. The bullet is what I should recommend. The rope is too much trouble."

"Decision in favour of shooting, instead of hanging."

"Exactly. Fire away. I am rather sensitive, and will turn my head in another direction."

"As you please."

During this conversation, Dick Dormer had made no observation.

The play of his features, however, was worth studying.

He was not calm and impassive, but the prey of extreme nervous anxiety.

His eyes blinked, his nostrils were dilated, and the corners of his mouth twitched.

"Hold!" he exclaimed; "do not kill me. I am afraid to die. The voice of the storm wind has hissed in my ears that the demons are waiting for me. Spare my life. The falling of the rock was an accident. Spare me. You may want mercy yourself some day. Besides, this is my island; why should you come here and molest me?"

Pike turned to Mole.

He was desirous of having a brief conversation with him respecting the old man's appeal.

"What shall we do?" he asked. "It certainly was the old man's island before we came here; he discovered it, or someone discovered it for him. I don't exactly like to kill him—nor would I, if I could make sure that he would leave us alone."

"He is treacherous," replied Mole—"his acts prove it; but we will give him another chance, I think, on certain conditions."

"If you say so——"

"I am not a hard man. I believe in the eminently Christian doctrine of living and let live."

"What are the conditions?" asked Pike.

"Let the man inform us where he procured the gold he has in his cave; let him inform us also how he came to be placed on this island—the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; thirdly, let him swear, by all he holds holy, that he will not make any further attempts on our lives. If he does this, we will spare him. That is what I propose."

"Can we trust him?" asked Pike, dubiously. "I do not want to be killed, for I have a firm conviction that we shall be taken off the island before long by some passing ship."

"Besides that, my friend," answered Mole, smiling slightly, "if we became tired of the monotony of life in Moleland, we could easily kill ourselves. Would it not be more satisfactory?"

"Certainly it would. I will put up my revolver. We will give the old man another chance."

"Yes," cried Mole; "he shall have it. No one shall say that I was unjust, cruel, or hasty."

Pike turned towards Dick Dormer.

"Have you heard what was said?" he asked. "If so, and you understand it, I shall be glad of your answer."

Dick Dormer stretched out his hand. An expression of gratitude came over his face, but it was doubtful if it was genuine.

The old man had shown himself to be as crafty as a fox.

Mole's clemency, after all, might be a mistake.

"Allow me to grasp your hand," he exclaimed. "I am deeply grateful to you for your kindness, and will do all in my power to show you that I deserve it."

"Do you accept our terms?" demanded Pike.

"I do. Firstly, I swear not to harm a hair of your heads, as I hope to be forgiven for my sins."

"That is pretty good for a start. Go on."

"You shall know all," continued Dick Dormer. "I have kept something back, and will tell you my history."

"What about the gold?"

"You shall be made acquainted with with my source of supply. Some gold you saw in my cave, but there is much more where that came from—enough to make the three of us rich for life."

"Would you like us to go back to the cave?"

"No. Walk along the island with me. We will talk as we go."

"As you like; I'm agreeable," said Pike.

They started, walking side by side, in a north-easterly direction.

The old man was in the middle. Mr. Mole and Pike waited for him to speak.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE TREASURE—THE CONFESSION—TREACHERY.

SOME minutes elapsed before Dick Dormer opened his mouth again.

He appeared to be going back into the past, to collect his thoughts.

"Two years ago," he said, at length, "there was a dreadful storm. It can storm, too, in these latitudes when it wants to, at certain times of the year, especially about the equinox, in the autumn and the spring. A ship was thrown on the island, and beached high and dry. Not one of the crew survived—all were drowned. I found the vessel embedded in the sand up to her bulwarks. Many things I got out of her. The bags of gold you saw came from her. There are a hundred or more there now. I will show you the ship. You can help yourselves. What is the use of gold to me—or, for the matter of that to you?"

"It's a fortune!" cried Pike.

"How much do you suppose there is in pounds sterling?" Mr. Mole inquired.

"A hundred thousand pounds—English," replied Dick Dormer—"or thereabouts. It was a London vessel, engaged in the China trade, as far as I could make out."

"Cargo?"

"Silk and tea. You can have your fill of that, as well as the gold; but where are the women to wear the silks, or the dressmakers?"

"We will have the gold, though. It will come in handy when we are taken off the island."

"When you are?"

"What do you mean by throwing cold water on our hopes like that?"

"There is no hope. I told you so before," exclaimed the old man. "Do you know the prospect I have dreaded for some time?"

"How should I?" replied Mole.

"This island is, I am persuaded, of volcanic origin. In the centre there is a spot where foul gases and sulphurous vapours arise. It was upheaved in some great convulsion of Nature, and will subside in the same way before long."

"Have you had an earthquake?"

"Several small tremblings. They are of constant occurrence. Sometimes as I am walking about, the earth trembles, and I am thrown violently to the ground."

"That is a danger I did not suspect," said Pike.

"I can quite believe it," replied Mole. "And after this notification, the best thing we can do will be to fill our boat with gold, and such provisions as we can get, and chance our fate on the bosom of the mighty deep."

"I quite agree with you," answered Pike; "although, on consideration, is not the peril of the sea as bad as that of the land?"

"No, I think not. Moleland is not such a desirable acquisition as I first thought it. If I go into the real estate business, I will locate elsewhere."

While they were talking, they had made considerable progress, and on rounding a point, they came in full view of the ship that Dick Dormer had spoken of.

It was, as he had stated, embedded in the sand, and they easily stepped on board of her.

The old man had carefully, time after time, scraped away the sand from the companion-way.

He conducted them below.

In the captain's cabin, he showed them three average-sized boxes, which were filled with bags of gold.

Some of the pieces were American eagles, but the majority were sovereigns of the British Mint.

Mole and Pike gazed upon them with admiration, not entirely unmingled with avarice.

"Something worth having there," said Pike.

"Half for you, and half for me," replied the professor.

"This is a veritable treasure island. We must transport it to the boat. It will do instead of the ballast."

"It won't stop here long."

"Not if I know it. I shall buy a landed estate in England, and be a country gentleman. No more of Jack Harkaway's adventures for me."

"Had enough of it, eh?"

"My dear sir," answered Mole, "I am like Ulysses : I have had my Odyssey. I may add that I resemble Jason, who, in the dim past, went sailing with his Argonauts in search of the Golden Fleece."

"You have found it."

"Yes ; and you sha'n't fleece me."

"We'll have a fair divide. To-morrow, we'll carry the gold to the boat. No more island for me."

"I echo your sentiments."

Dick Dormer went to a locker, which he opened.

It had a dozen shelves, which were crowded with bottles of spirits, cordials and wines. Some were empty, but several had not been touched.

"Help yourselves, gentlemen," he said. "I am not much of a drinker. What I have touched has been taken when I have had the fever and ague, which is prevalent here in the spring and the fall."

Mr. Mole smacked his lips.

"Ha, ha ! this is good," he exclaimed. "My friend, you have redeemed yourself."

He advanced to the rows of bottles, and examined their labels.

"Port !—too warm for that," he continued. "Hock !—rather light. Cognac brandy !—that's better."

Taking up a bottle, he dexterously knocked the neck off with a piece of wood.

"A practiced hand, sir," remarked Pike.

"What's that to do with you ?" asked Mole.

"Nothing at all."

"So I should think. Mind your own business."

"That is a thing I never could do. I have always been engaged on other people's."

"This bottle is mine. If you want anything, help yourself."

The professor put the broken bottle to his lips, and indulged in a deep draught.

It took effect on him immediately, for it was strong and old.

Staggering, he reeled against the wall, and slid down gently on the floor.

But instinctively he retained his hold upon the bottle.

"Most ex—extraordinary—think," he said—"something wrong with the ship, I guess."

"Your legs have given way," replied Pike.

"No. Ship gave a lurch. Sea on. I know."

"It is high and dry."

"You're dry. Don't tell—hic—lies, sir; they don't become a man of your years. I say it's—hic—ship. Storm raging. No matter. Batten down. Close—hic—hatches."

Mr. Mole seemed to be very comfortable, for he stretched out his legs, and leaned his back against the side.

"I could stay here till morning doth appear," he muttered.

Pike thought this was a good opportunity to get the old man's confession out of him.

He was very curious to know his history.

Accordingly, he pressed him to comply with the promise he had given.

In a shamefaced way, Dick Dormer complied.

It was a regrettable page in his life, and although he might shed many tears, he could not blot it out.

What he had at first said about having a wife and children at Sunderland was not true.

He had been in love with a girl in that town, and so had the captain under whom he sailed.

They were rivals, in fact.

During the voyage, constant disputes arose between them.

At last, Dormer came behind the captain, and treacherously stabbed him in the back with a knife.

He fell to rise no more. The dark deed had been witnessed by two sailors.

They informed the rest of the crew.

The murderer was made prisoner, and tried by his mates, who, of course, found him guilty on the evidence.

At first they were inclined to sentence him to death.

He had been a favorite with the men.

This fact alone saved his life.

The sentence was that he be marooned on the first desert island they came to.

"That's how I came here, sir," he concluded; "and here I've got to stay, by the looks of it."

Whether Mole heard this confession or not, is doubtful.

His head was drooping on one side, and he was snoring loudly.

The potency of the brandy had brought on a heavy sleep.

"You look upon yourself as king of the island," said Pike.

"I was, till you came here," was the rather surly reply. "Why should you interfere with my little comforts, and disturb the even tenor of my way?"

"We are going to leave you. Did you not hear us say that we would take the gold in our boat?"

"It is my gold, not yours. Why should you take it away from me? If a ship should ever take me off, why should I not have it?"

"Because we want it."

"You have no right to take it," cried Dick Dormer, getting angry.

It was easy to see that he could soon work himself into a passion.

"We are the strongest, because we are two to one," replied Pike; "and we are armed."

Dormer pointed contemptuously at Mole.

"Do you call him a man?" he asked. "Not now. At present, you are only one."

"I'm a better man than you, so you'd best hold your tongue, or I shall give you a hiding."

"Beware! I have killed one man in my time, and I can do another," cried the old man.

"Is that a threat?"

"Construe it in any way you like."

Pike's reply was to throw out his fist.

Before the old man could protect himself, he was knocked down.

A cry like that of a wild beast broke from him.

He had fallen on the top of the professor.

Though the impact was heavy, it only elicited a grunt from the somnolent gentleman.

In Mr. Mole's belt was his six-chambered revolver.

The old man no sooner saw it than he made a grab at it.

Quick as lightning, he regained his feet, and pointed the weapon at the detective.

The situation was as effective as it was dramatic.

"Hold your hands up, or I fire," he shouted.

Taken at a disadvantage, Pike was constrained to do so.

Dormer took a step towards him, and deprived him of his knife and pistol.

He was now entirely at the mercy of the old islander.

"Down on your knees," yelled Dormer.

With a wry face, Pike obeyed the order.

"Beg for mercy. Beg, I tell you," he went on.

"Mercy," repeated Pike.

"Ha, ha ! It makes me laugh," said Dormer. "Who is the best man now ? You were going to rule and rob me because you were strong. It is my turn now."

"Spare our lives," replied Pike.

"Beg again—beg ! I like to hear it."

"Spare me," reiterated Pike.

"That's glorious. Well, I shall let you live, because I want two slaves to wait on me and to beat them. I like to beat men. It would be a pleasure to me to break a stick over the back of that old brandy cask lying there."

He indicated Mole with his hand.

For the moment he was off his guard.

His forgetfulness was fatal to his chance of being superior to the others.

Pike saw his opportunity.

He sprang up and again struck him, this time so violently, that he was stunned.

His head fell against the side of the ship.

Pike instantly possessed himself of the weapons Dormer had deprived them of.

"Hurrah !" he cried ; "that's the cleverest bit of business I ever did in my life."

For a brief space, he thought the situation out in his mind.

It was, and would be, dangerous to live on the island with such a man as Dick Dormer.

An antagonism had already arisen between them.

Once he had endeavored to kill them with the rock, and having deprived them of their arms, he expressed his intention of making them his slaves.

There was no telling where the ill-feeling might end.

In a fit of mad passion he might slay them, as he had killed his rival, the captain.

"He must die," muttered Pike, grimly.

It was a fearful necessity, but Pike put all sentimental considerations on one side.

He regarded Dick Dormer as one does a rabid dog, or a venomous reptile.

Self-preservation demanded that he should be rendered harmless.

This could not be done unless he was put out of the way.

Raising his pistol, he put it to the head of the insensible man and fired.

The result was immediate.

Dick Dormer's limbs straightened out, and he was a corpse in less time than it takes to write it.

Pike lifted the body in his arms, and cast it over the side into the wavelets, which, as the tide came in, were laving the bows of the wrecked ship.

It was gradually, but surely sucked out to sea.

Having accomplished this deed, which was very distasteful to him, Pike turned his attention to Mole.

He knew that if he wanted to awaken him, gentle measures were of no use.

You could not call him as you would a sleeping man.

It required heroic measures to rouse the professor when under the influence of liquor.

To begin with, he gave him half-a-dozen rough kicks in the sides.

These he called rib-roasters, and after them he rubbed Mole's ears till he made them bleed.

Then he put a pinch of snuff up his nose, with the effect of making him sneeze so violently that he bumped his head several times against the floor.

"What the deuce is the matter?" demanded Mole. "Ship on fire? If so, put it out."

"Wake up, I want you," replied Pike.

"Why didn't you say so at first? Oh, dear, how my sides ache! Oh, lor', oh!"

He did not know that he was indebted to Pike's rib-roasting for this feeling.

Getting up, he took a refresher, as he termed it, out of the bottle.

"Why is that like the Athenian goddess of wisdom?" he asked.

"Give it up," replied Pike.

"Because it is Minerva—my nerver. See? Twig? Ha, ha!" laughed the professor.

"You wouldn't laugh if you knew what has been going on while you slept," said Pike.

"Any thing wrong?"

"We have narrowly escaped a great danger."

"You don't say so? Where's old Rocks? What d'ye call him?—old Blunderbuss of the Cave."

"Gone to kingdom come—food for fishes. I had to shoot him through the head."

Mr. Mole was fairly astounded.

"Well, I am astonished!" he gasped. "Poor old beggar! what did he do?"

Pike informed him of what had passed.

On reflection, Mole declared that, in his opinion, he had acted rightly, and that the solitary murderer deserved his fate.

Pike pointed to the body, which, floating out with the tide, bobbed up and down like a cork.

As he did so, he scanned the horizon.

On the verge, his quick eye discovered a sail.

He grew greatly excited.

"By heaven, Mole," he shouted, "there is a ship!"

"Just what I anticipated all along," replied Mole.

"We must make signals."

"Let us take her rig in first. Perhaps she's a pirate," said Mole, cautiously.

"It may be so, but I hope not."

"What shall we do if it is a Chinese junk?"

"Hide in the old man's cave," replied Pike.

"Good advice."

They waited anxiously for the ship to come nearer.

To their great joy it was not a pirate but a full-rigged American ship. Her build seemed to be familiar to them.

So indeed it was.

The ship bearing down upon them was no other than that from which they had been separated.

Jack Harkaway and his friends were on board.

They found their supply of fresh water getting low, so they made for the first land they saw.

This happened to be the desert island.

The feelings of the castaways can be better imagined than described.

Pike took off his shirt, tied it to a pole, and waved it in the air as a signal.

It was seen.

The ship anchored in a land-locked bay, and a boat was lowered.

They saw Harkaway and Harvey step into it.

Unable to restrain themselves, Mr. Mole and Pike ran to the beach to welcome the old friends they once fancied they had lost for ever.

The meeting was a very cordial one.

Harkaway and Harvey listened to the adventures of the castaways with great interest.

The sailors took off a supply of water.

Pike accompanied them with a quantity of gold, which he was anxious to secure.

He left Mr. Mole to show Harkaway and Harvey the scenery, they having arranged to leave the island when the boat came back for them, in about an hour's time.

This event never happened.

A terrible calamity was in store for them.

It was heralded by a hissing and boiling of the sea, and a souging of the wind through the branches of the trees.

To those who understood the signs of the climate in which they were, it was clear that a tropical storm was coming.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

A SUDDEN STORM.

"I SAY," exclaimed Jack, scanning the horizon narrowly, "we are going to have the deuce and all of a storm."

"A tempest, I should imagine," replied Harvey. "It is getting dark although it is only midday."

"The sun is obscure," continued Jack. "Are there any volcanoes in these parts?"

He addressed this remark to the professor.

"The old man declared that there used to be occasional flare-ups, if I may use the term," was the answer.

"How should we feel if this island was swept by a volcanic wave, eh?" asked Jack.

"Rather damp and uncomfortable, I expect, Harkaway; but if you want shelter, I can afford it you."

"Where?"

"In the old man's cave. It's a first-rate place to rest or hide in, and I may mention one thing."

"What is that?"

"There is a store of good liquor—wines and spirits—in the cave."

"Of course, that just suits you," laughed Jack. "How did the old man get such things?"

"Out of the wreck. Being very abstemious, they have lasted him a long time."

"That is more than they will you."

"Well, I am going on board the ship when the boat comes back; I don't suppose I shall have much more need of the bottles," replied Mr. Mole.

"They will do for the next fellow who happens to be cast away here."

"There are worse places in which to exist than this. The old josser who met his fate to-day was very comfortable in his den."

"How did you like Crusoeing it?" Jack inquired.

"Fairly well. It was the uncertainty of getting off that worried me."

"You knew we should try and find you," observed Harvey.

"I was not so sure of that. It is a selfish world."

"You ungrateful old duffer."

"Call me no names, but follow me to the den. The air is growing denser," replied Mole.

"So it is, by Jove!" said Jack.

"I can hardly breathe," answered Harvey. "Don't you think there is a smell of sulphur?"

"I don't think—I'm positive of it."

"Look out for eruptions, then."

The earth at that moment trembled slightly.

All looked at one another in consternation.

Was this the forerunner of an earthquake?

Again the sensation was felt, this time with more force than at first.

The seismic disturbance was travelling from west to east.

A minute passed slowly.

No further trembling was experienced.

The distant rumbling of thunder could be heard.

Out at sea, the sky was as black as night.

The boat in which Pike had gone with the sailors, who were returning with the water, was close to the ship.

Those on the island watched her progress with interest.

It was a highly dangerous time.

With a pleasure they could not conceal from one another, they saw the boat reach the ship, and those in it climb up the chains.

"Safe!" cried Jack.

"We can not expect them to come for us till the storm is over," said Harvey.

"It is not likely!"

During this conversation, they had neared the cave.

Some heavy drops of rain began to fall.

There was evidently going to be a deluge before long.

They quickened their steps, and reached the shelter of the cave ere the storm burst.

Through the window, made by the old man, they could look out seaward.

The waves were rising and swelling.

Suddenly a most unusual phenomenon took place.

About a quarter of a mile from the shore, a huge wave arose.

It appeared to be a mighty volcanic upheaval.

For a few moments it was doubtful in what direction it was going.

The vast wave did not long remain stationary, however.

Jack, Harvey, and Mr. Mole were standing together, and gazing awestruck at this freak of Nature.

If it raced landward, the island would be submerged, and great destruction done. The trees and fruit would be swept away.

If the three were not drowned, what would be their fate? The rocks might tumble upon and crush them.

At this dreadful crisis, vivid lightning darted from the sky, illuminating the darkened ocean.

The thunder crashed with a deafening roar.

Then the wave dashed out to sea, taking the direction of the ship.

On board were Emily and Hilda.

The hearts of their husbands sank within them, for the girls seemed to be in imminent danger of death.

Onward with a fierce, irresistible fury went the wave. A cloud, black as ink, came down, enveloping the vessel and hiding it from sight.

"Heaven help them!" groaned Jack.

This prayer was faintly echoed by Harvey.

For fully ten minutes the storm lasted, with supreme violence.

Then the thunder rolled away and died off in the distance, the lightning ceased playing, the darkness lifted, and the sun shone brightly as was its wont in that delightful but treacherous climate.

Nothing was to be seen of the ship.

Had it gone down or weathered the storm?

The wave might have passed over it, carrying it along in its wake.

If it remained afloat, was it a disabled log, drifting at the mercy of the tide and wind?

Who could answer these questions?

Jack and Harvey were deeply depressed, but Mr. Mole took a cheerful view of the situation.

"Don't give way, boys," he exclaimed. "If the ship had been driven on the land, all hands must have perished."

"I fear," replied Harkaway, "that we shall never see our loved ones again."

"How could the vessel survive the shock of that wave?" asked Harvey.

"Depend upon it, she will turn up before many days," Mole continued.

"What makes you think so?"

"She was close reefed. We have always found her seaworthy, and the captain knows his business up to the handle."

"Heaven grant it may prove so!"

"That fellow Pike was lucky to get on board before the storm burst and the wave came rushing after him. There are volcanoes under the sea, and that sheet of water was the result of an eruption. Well, we must hope for the best. We're all right. Have a drink?"

The offer was accepted, and, presently, when they were in a calmer state of mind, they discussed the event which had just taken place.

There was no proof that the vessel was lost.

It was just as likely that she had been driven out to sea, badly injured, as that she had foundered.

They left it an open question.

What was plain to them was this—they were confined on the island without any chance, visible to either, of getting off.

"This is indeed a change in a few short hours," remarked Jack. "It seems as if some demon was putting obstacles in the way of our finding Hunston and my boy."

"Do not despair. Have a drop of this old rum," answered Mole.

"I would rather take something to eat," replied Jack; "we had not dined before we left the ship."

"Will you eat fruit, of which there is abundance," asked the professor, "or do you fancy shellfish, or will you rather cook some sea-birds, which can be knocked down with a stick?"

"Fruit will do. It will be a change after the salt junk we have had lately."

Mr. Mole quitted the cave, and was absent for some minutes, when he came back laden with several varieties of fruit.

The remainder of the day was spent in a gloomy, half-hearted manner.

Harkaway and Harvey were continually looking over the sea for some sign of the missing vessel.

But not the slightest sign could they discern of her.

The sun sank lower and lower, until it dropped into the sea.

Darkness fell upon the restless ocean and the land alike.

Accommodating themselves as well as they could in the cave, they forgot their troubles in sleep.

When they awoke in the morning, the wind was blowing strongly inshore.

The tide dashed in large, foam-laden breakers upon the sandy shore.

Each one looked out eagerly for wreckage, but not the vestige of a spar or even a water-cask was to be seen.

This fact raised their drooping spirits considerably.

If the crowning misfortune they dreaded had befallen

the ship, some portion of her equipment would surely have been washed on the beach during the night.

There was hope for the safety of their relatives and friends yet ; also was there hope for themselves, for if the ship was not lost, those on board would return to the island and take them off.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE WRECK OF A CHINESE JUNK—AN OLD FACE—BETRAYED BY A VILLAIN.

THREE days elapsed, passing with dreary monotony.

On the morning of the fourth day, the three castaways were confined to the cave.

It was blowing hard from the southwest, and heavy rain was falling.

Jack had found some tobacco plants on the island.

The leaves he dried in the sun, and crushing them up for his pipe, found them a great comfort.

He had been smoking placidly.

Harvey was ill with a touch of ague.

Mole was lying on his back, snoring loudly, under the influence of old Jamaica.

Going to the aperture which served as a window, Harkaway looked out on the stormy ocean.

To his surprise he beheld a Chinese junk dismasted, driving before the wind.

Those on board had lost all control over it.

It was literally at the mercy of the waves.

The distance between it and the shore was only a short one, being about a quarter of a mile.

The junk was a large one, and had evidently encountered severe weather.

Its deck was crowded with, at least, thirty Chinamen, who had a piratical appearance.

Pistols and long knives were stuck in their belts.

A white man stood in the bows, watching the low-lying shore, calculating how long it would be before the junk struck.

He was the only one of European race that could be discovered on board.

The point to which the ill-fated junk was being driven was not above half-a-mile or three furlongs from the cave.

It was useless to speak to Mole, so Jack addressed himself to Harvey.

"Dick," he said, "here's a Chinese junk—or, rather, the wreck of one—being blown ashore."

With difficulty, Harvey got up, his legs being weak, and his head as heavy as lead.

"We met more than a dozen," replied he, "not fifty miles from this island—pirates, our captain called them—and, crowding all sail, we gave them a wide berth."

"It has been roughly handled in a gale."

"Easy enough to see that. The junk is dismasted."

"Keep close," added Jack; "they must not see us. Chinese pirates show no mercy to Europeans."

"Nor to Americans either. We are all 'foreign devils' in their eyes."

"Confound them! Why could they not keep away from here?"

"Perhaps they will all be drowned."

"Good job if they are," growled Jack, between his teeth.

"Do you see that white man in the forecastle?" asked Harvey.

"Yes. I spotted him just now."

"He has got hold of a hen-coop or something. It will be a cold day if he is left."

"Several of the Chinese have pieces of wood in their hands. It will be a swim for life."

As he spoke, Jack again narrowly scrutinised the junk that was fast nearing destruction,

"Dick," he continued, "I fancy I have seen that white man's face before. He is looking this way."

The rain ceased falling and the sun came out, which rendered the person's countenance strikingly visible.

"I have an idea of the same sort," answered Harvey; "but then, going about the world as we do, we see so many people, that it is impossible to remember and particularise them all."

"Did not we see him in Singapore, after schooldays?" asked Jack.

"I really can not recollect."

"He reminds me very much of a fellow calling himself Peter Punchard, a native of Portsmouth. If so, he was first mate of a merchantman, and a fast friend of our enemy, Hunston."

"Ah," said Harvey, "I call the man to mind now. There were strange tales told about him at the club."

"Yes. It was rumoured that he was in league with Chinese pirates, having betrayed more than one ship into their hands."

"Precisely so."

"If that is the case, and it should turn out to be this man, we shall have to keep a sharp lookout."

"He isn't saved yet. None of them are. The crash is coming, though. See! The ship will strike shortly."

They both strained their eyes to watch the imminent catastrophe.

The wind and tide bore the helpless ship steadily onwards.

It was a moment of the most intense excitement.

At length the junk went on some surf-washed rocks, which were only a foot or two below the surface at low water.

She keeled over, and sank with a list to leeward.

Instantly the sea was filled with struggling wretches, swimming for their lives.

The dark fins of more than one shark were to be seen.

Loud shrieks rent the air, as several of the Chinese were seized by the voracious monsters of the deep, and dragged under.

The water was rapidly stained red with the blood of the victims.

At least a score of the Chinamen, however, contrived to reach the shore unharmed.

It was also noticed that the man they supposed to be Peter Punchard, once of Singapore, effected a landing.

He was none the worse for his sudden immersion.

The Chinese, with characteristic stolidity, did not seem greatly concerned at the misfortune which had overtaken them.

Some basked in the sun to dry their clothes ; others looked curiously at the wreck, and a few strolled about, gathering fruit and cocoanuts, which they retired under some palm-trees to eat.

The white man remained in conversation with a Chinaman, who was a head taller than the rest.

He had a commanding presence, and appeared to be the chief.

After a time the white quitted his companion, and walked inland, as if to explore his new abode.

No doubt he wanted to ascertain if it was inhabited, and what were its capacities for sustaining life.

When he was gone, the chief gave some orders in a loud voice to his followers.

They instantly drew their long knives from their belts.

As is usual on the islands off the China coast, there was a multitude of bamboos.

A number of these they cut down, driving them into the earth, close together, under the palm-trees.

They were at least ten feet high.

Soon a strong double stockade was erected of a circular shape.

It had a narrow aperture for a doorway, and was open at the top.

This was strong enough to protect them from the attack of an enemy.

It also formed a shelter from wild beasts, should there be any.

This precautionary measure being taken, the Chinese fell into their former listless attitude.

The junk quickly began to break up.

Portions of wreckage and cargo were washed ashore by the waves.

These were eagerly seized, and conveyed to the stockade.

Some chests of tea and a crate of crockery, teapots, cups, and plates, seemed to afford them special satisfaction.

"They are smart and handy fellows," remarked Harvey.

"Jolly lazy though," replied Jack.

"That is constitutional and climatic. Look at the chief! He looks a regular swagger kind of Mandarin chap."

"It did not take them long to knock up that stockade. Splendid idea."

"I wonder if they will be friendly?" asked Harvey.
"What do you think?"

"That is what I am going to find out."

"How? Be careful. You are always foolhardy."

"It is my adventurous disposition, over which I have no control."

"True enough. You wouldn't be Jack Harkaway, were it not so; but pray exercise judgment."

"I fully intend to do so."

"What is your plan?" continued Harvey.

"To ascertain whether they are friends or enemies. We can't live on the island long without meeting them."

"That's so."

"I shall take a trot inland to have a talk with the man we fancy is Peter Punchard," said Jack.

"We may be mistaken, and probably are."

"In an hour I will find out. Look after Mole. If he wakes up, keep him in the cave."

"All right."

Harvey did not attempt to dissuade Jack from undertaking the enterprise.

He knew from experience that it would be useless to do so.

It was impossible to restrain him when he had once made up his mind to do a thing.

Taking his pistol, Jack left the cave, and followed in the track of the white man.

He was a strongly-built, middle-aged person, with dark hair, a long, black beard, and swarthy complexion.

His face was rugged, weather-beaten, and full of a dare-devil, do-as-I-please-and-ask-nobody kind of expression.

Walking quickly under the fruit trees, and over the profusely flower-laden earth, which was like a variegated pasture, Jack soon came up with the person of whom he was in search.

They were a couple of miles, if not more, from the sea.

Therefore, they were quite alone, and free from interruption.

The man was seated under a tree, cutting up pineapples with his knife, and eating them with evident relish.

"Hullo! Good-morning," exclaimed Jack.

The man started, and grasped the butt of his pistol.

In a moment Jack had covered him with his own weapon, which he hastily snatched from his belt.

"Who, in Satan's name, are you?" growled the man, eyeing him with curiosity.

Jack fancied that a look of recognition came over his face.

It was followed by a smile of triumph, and then he assumed a grave, stolid look.

"I was just going to ask you the same question," replied Jack; "for it struck me that I had seen you somewhere before."

"Whereabouts, boss? I can't place you."

"In Singapore. Are you Peter Punchard?"

The man laughed loudly.

"You are wrong," he said. "Never heard the name before. Never was in Singapore in my life. I'm Bill Driver, of Leeds, England, able seaman, before the mast."

"Are you sure?"

"Wish I may die if I ain't. My ship, the *Fanny*, of Leeds, was going to Hong Kong with a mixed cargo. We got caught in a tempest, took to the boats; all in my boat died, except me. I was picked up by a friendly Chinese junk. Another storm drove us on this darned old island."

"I saw the wreck."

"Infernal bad luck, wasn't it? Junk all smashed up, one-third of the crew gobbled up by sharks. Captain of junk—Hi Lung, nice fellow, good as gold—saved."

Bill Driver, as he called himself, spoke with such sincerity, that Harkaway was fain to believe him.

He returned his pistol to his belt.

"Well," added Driver, "burn my toes if I ain't glad to see a white man, like myself! Been here long?"

"A few days only."

"Many of you saved from your wreck?"

He took it for granted that Jack had been wrecked the same as himself.

"Two, besides myself."

"What kind of location is it—savages, cannibals? Ugh! Makes you shiver to think of 'em."

"Desert island," answered Jack. "No wild animals, plenty of fruit, shell fish, and birds."

"That's good. Guess we're stranded for a consider-

able spell. Out of the track of ships. Never seen this island on the chart."

"I hope to get off it, some day."

"Same here, guv'nor," replied Bill Driver. "Life here would soon become monotonous. Let's make friends. Pal up! I like your style and face. Shake hands!"

Harkaway hesitated a moment.

His heart told him that the man was genuine, but his instinct, which very seldom led him wrong, bade him be cautious.

"Tip us your fin. Come on. We're comrades in misfortune, and down on our luck," added Driver.

Jack did so.

He held out his hand in a friendly manner.

Driver got up from his sitting position, to take it ostensibly.

But instead of doing so, he drew his pistol, clubbed it, and struck Jack on the head.

The treacherous blow stunned him.

He fell full length, insensible, at his assailant's feet.

The blood trickled slowly from a scalp wound.

"Ha, ha!" laughed Driver, "I've done the trick easier than I thought I should. Lor'! what a fool he was, to be sure!"

Taking a small coil of rope from his pocket, he bound Harkaway's hands behind him, and removed his weapon.

Then he sat down under the tree again, and, lighting his pipe, waited, with the utmost coolness, for him to recover his senses.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING—HARKAWAY IS MADE PRISONER
—A TRIUMPH FOR HUNSTON.

It was clear to the meanest comprehension, from his actions and his manner, that the old sailor was a wolf in sheep's clothing.

He had grossly deceived Harkaway and taken a base advantage of his credulity.

The blow on the head which the latter had received was productive only of a brief unconsciousness.

Jack's head had been knocked about a good deal in the course of his adventurous life, young though he was.

Yet it was none the worse for it.

If the skull was thick, the brain inside was active and clear enough, in spite of all.

When he came to himself, which he did in five minutes, he was a little confused.

Feeling sore and wet from a slight flow of blood at the back of the head, he tried to put his hand up.

This he was unable to do.

It dawned upon him in a moment that he had been assaulted and bound by the sailor, who called himself Bill Driver.

Harvey's suspicions and his own doubts respecting this man came back to him in a vivid manner.

"What cheer, my hearty?" cried the sailor.

"Perhaps you will explain the meaning of this?" said Jack, regarding him with a hostile look.

"That's easy enough, if you find yourself well enough to listen."

"Oh, I'm all right! That tap on the head you gave me did not hurt more than a mosquito bite."

"Didn't it, really! Would you like another?" asked the man, sarcastically.

"No, thank you. I'm not naturally of a greedy disposition."

"You can have 'em wholesale or retail. Just as you like. Order a gross, if you feel you could do with 'em."

"Enough's as good as a feast!"

"Nothing like moderation in every thing, eh? Afraid you might get an overdose?"

"Mind you don't, some day," replied Jack, warningly.

The sailor laughed, and rubbed his hands gleefully.

He seemed to be enjoying a good joke.

"Wouldn't you just revel in warming me up a bit? Couldn't you pile it on, and lay it on thick as molasses?" he said.

"You want all the say to yourself, don't you?" Jack enquired.

"I'm rather of a talkative disposition. You want to know why I floored you and tied your hands?"

"That is what I am yearning to get at."

"First of all, I'm not Bill Driver," replied the man.

"Who the deuce are you, then?"

"Peter Punchard, at your service. Your old acquaintance of Singapore, first mate of the *Rattlesnake*, trading between the Straits and China."

"I thought so, all along. Why did you deny it?"

"To throw you off your guard," said Peter Punchard.

"What harm have I ever done you? and what good will come to you by making me a prisoner?"

"You are the well-known Jack Harkaway."

"I am not ashamed to admit it," answered Jack. "In fact, I am rather proud of the distinction than otherwise, for there is not one act in my life that I am ashamed of."

"Nobody said there was. The general opinion is that you are a fine kind of man, but I must tell you that I am a sworn friend of your life-long enemy, Hunston, and, in my opinion, Hunston is a better man than you."

"I can see now why you attacked me, fool that I was! Keep your opinion of Hunston. You are a couple of frauds and rascals, banded together."

"Be civil, or it will be the worse for you!" cried Punchard, in a threatening manner.

"I will try to keep my tongue quiet, but it is a hard task."

"Hunston is my boss, not you; and, in the position you are, I should think it is a case of the least said, the soonest mended."

Jack bit his lips.

He was in the man's power, and could see that, in common parlance, it was wise to sing small.

"Where is Hunston now?" he enquired.

"In China. His exact whereabouts I shall not tell you," rejoined Peter Punchard.

"Is my boy, young Jack, with him?"

"You may pump me as long as you please; but I shall answer no questions. Those are my orders."

"Oh, you have received orders from your chief?"

"Yes, I have, straight! Hunston has offered five hundred pounds to anyone who will capture you, and bring you, alive, to him. That is why Hi Lung, the captain of the *Fanktze Kiang* junk which was wrecked just now, below there"—he jerked his hand towards the beach—"and I resolved to go in search of you."

"Then you have been looking for my ship?"

"For some time past. I little thought, when we were cast away on this blooming old island, that I should have the luck to fall in with you."

"What good will it do you?" asked Jack.

"I've got you, that's one satisfaction. We are in an awkward hole, I'll allow; but we shall get taken off in time, you bet."

"Say, perhaps. We may be here for life."

"I don't think it," replied Punchard. "Some of the junks will be putting in here for water, and I shall keep a beacon fire burning, on an eminence, night and day. There's plenty of wood."

Jack saw that there was no escape at present from the dilemma that the cunning of Punchard had placed him in.

He determined to make the best of it.

Hunston, when despatching his agents in search of him, had given them instructions to bring him, if caught, to his place of concealment, alive, wherever it might be.

There was a grain of comfort in that.

His life was in no danger.

"I suppose, Mr. Punchard," he said, "that if I give my parole—"

"What's that?" interrupted Peter. "It ain't English, nor yet Chinese."

"It's French. Means word of honour—not to escape. If I give you this, and as you have, I see, disarmed me, there is no necessity for keeping this bit of cord round my wrists."

Peter was paring and slicing another pineapple he had cut from a bed growing wild at his feet.

"Everybody says you're a gentleman, Mr. Harkaway," he replied.

"I hope you and all will ever find me so."

"I don't mind taking your pay—role—what d'ye call it? But if you were to play any hanky-panky tricks with me, I'd shoot you dead, so help me!"

"No danger of that. If I promise you that I will not attempt to escape, you need not be afraid."

"Give the word, then."

"I do. I am your prisoner on parole."

"Very good," said Peter Punchard.

He got up and cut the cord with his knife.

Jack stretched himself, rubbed his head, and coolly asked for a slice of pineapple, which was given him.

That he would be conducted to Hi Lung's camp, and detained there, he had no doubt.

Even if his ship had escaped the volcanic wave, and came back to the island, his chance of freedom was very remote.

Harvey and Mole would endeavour to find out what had become of him.

Yet to depend on their aid was to lean on a broken reed.

They were in great danger of being discovered, and getting killed or captured themselves.

"Now," said Punchard, "we will go to our camp. I must introduce you to Hi Lung, the prince of pirates."

"Is he a nice fellow?" asked Jack; "but I need not put the question, for I never met a good Chinaman in my life yet."

"He is morose, sullen, stern, smokes and chews opium to excess. The gloomy fit is always on him," was the reply.

"What do you mean by that?"

"The beggar has cut so many throats in his time, that he is haunted by ghosts."

"Remorse, eh?"

"Spell it with a big R! It is remorse of the worst kind. He's always thinking something dreadful's going to happen; and this wreck has stirred him up awful."

"Is he melancholy mad?"

"I s'pose that's what you call it in doctors' language. He started me out to explore the island, because he thought it was full of cannibals, wild animals, and poisonous snakes."

"There is nothing of either kind," replied Jack.

"He won't believe it when I tell him. Hi Lung has fully made up his heathen mind that he is going to leave his bones here, when he goes over to the spirit world."

"A Chinese hates to be buried out of his own country."

"I know it," said Punchard. "When they die abroad, their friends always take their bones to China for sepulture, if they can afford it."

"Talking of friends," continued Punchard, "reminds me that you are not alone here. Who are your people?"

"That I cannot reveal to you," answered Jack.

Peter Punchard laughed lightly.

"Oh, that don't matter!" he replied. "Didn't you say there were two along of you? I'll find them, and the Chinamen will make mince-meat of them. We have to take you alive. The order is to kill all that belong to you, root and branch."

"Women as well as men?" queried Jack.

"Ay. No mercy, no quarter to any of Harkaway's division!"

"What a brute that fellow Hunston is."

"He's going to torture you to death. Kill you by inches and half-inches. Chinese style, up to date!"

"When he gets a safe hold of me," Jack said, with a smile.

"Oh, come now, captain!" Punchard cried, "that's good. Is it likely you will ever get out of my clutches? and, you know, I shall deliver you to Mr. Hunston, same as if you were a bale of goods consigned to him, duty paid."

"We shall see," replied Jack.

"I remember at Singapore," continued Punchard, "you had Harvey with you, Professor Mole, and a blamed, artful nigger, named Monday. Are they with you now?"

"Fish, and find out!"

"Thank you. That's a polite answer. Mr. Hunston said I was to let old Mole alone."

"He ought to be grateful for that."

"'Ain't no harm in the drunken old fool,' he says; 'but be down on Harvey like a beaver; and, as for Monday,' he says, with an oath, 'I hate him! Cut his liver out!' I wish he had nine lives, instead of one, to take. Never mind. Come on."

They started side by side for the coast, stopping at intervals to pluck some grapes or bread fruit.

As far as a vegetarian diet went, they had ample facility for gratifying their appetites.

In a short time they reached the stockade.

It was the hottest part of the afternoon.

The Chinese were lying down in the shade, with the exception of their leader.

Hi Lung was standing on the strand, looking at the wreck of his junk, the *Yanktze Kiang*, which was rapidly going to pieces.

His aspect was sad and his countenance elongated.

"Hi!" exclaimed Peter Punchard. "How goes it, old son of a gun?"

The Celestial started, looked up, and stared at Punchard and his companion.

"Who havee metee with?" he demanded, laconically.

"The great English Mandarin, Jack Harkaway!" replied Peter. "He has been wrecked here, same as us, and I captured him."

"What! the Mandarin, Hunston givee money for?"

"Exactly the same. The only genuine and original article."

"Good! we takee care of him."

Hi Lung took up a stone and threw it at one of his piratical crew.

It struck him on the arm, causing him to wake up with a jump.

"Who called me?" he asked.

"Chang," said Hi Lung, "you watchee this mannee all day, and put him in the stockade at night. Tie your leg to him. On your life, be answerable for him!"

The Chinese walked up to Jack and stood close to him.

"It is not necessary," remarked Peter Punchard. "He has given me his promise not to try to escape; besides, he has no arms, and he can't get off the island any more than we can at the present time."

"I givee him no chancers. He shall be a worker."

"At what?"

"Since you have been gone, I have seen the ghosts of the dead," replied Hi Lung.

"You are always seeing something."

"Be a listener. I know that we have all to die here of fever. One by one we shall go. Harkaway must be a digger of gravees."

"What, dig our graves?" Punchard said.

"Yes. Underer those palm trees in front, he shall dig two gravees each dayee. There are twenty-two of us. When we die, there will be the tombers readee for us."

This was a strange hallucination on the part of the pirate captain.

But he had got it firmly fixed in his mind.

Peter Punchard would gladly have saved Jack from the hard, manual labor to which he was condemned.

But he knew it was useless to argue the point with so bigoted and misanthropical a being as Hi Lung.

Chang touched Jack on the arm, and beckoned him to follow.

"I can't help it," said Punchard. "'Tain't my fault. I told you he was a rum 'un to deal with. Maybe he will change his mind to-morrow."

"Bother digging graves!" replied Jack. "I'm not a sexton."

"Don't round on me!"

"Can't you reason with him?"

"Might as well talk to a stone wall."

With a shrug of the shoulders, Jack followed Chang, who stopped at the stockade.

Here he took up a spade, which had been washed ashore with some other agricultural implements.

"This for you to usee," he remarked.

Shouldering it, Jack went to the adjacent palm grove, and began to initiate himself in the novel, but rather depressing occupation of gravedigging.

"You gottee to diggee our gravees," said Chang, stolidly.

The ground was sandy, and the work easy.

Jack did not trouble or hurry himself. When he felt tired, he rested for a spell, and knocked down cocoanuts off the palms with stones and sticks.

With these he refreshed himself.

It was a strange reverse of fortune.

He was now the slave of Peter Punchard and the Chinese emissaries of Hunston.

Certainly, he might have run away, and hidden himself with his friends.

But he had pledged his word of honour not to do so.

This was enough for Harkaway.

Rather would he dig graves to please the morbid misgivings of an opium-crazed Chinaman, than allow the slightest blot to fall on his escutcheon.

He had two glimmers of hope.

One was that his ship would weather the storm, and come back to the island.

The other was, that Mole and Harvey might find him out, and destroy the Chinese vermin.

It was long odds against them, however.

Twenty-two to only two !

If they succeeded it would be a marvel.

Yet more extraordinary things than that had happened before in the course of Jack Harkaway's experiences.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

HARVEY AND MOLE ARE ALARMED AT JACK'S ABSENCE—THEY
MAKE A DISCOVERY AND A DETERMINATION.

THE time passed slowly for Harvey, who was practically alone in the cave.

Mr. Mole could not be called a companion, because, overcome with the fumes of liquor, he was fast asleep.

The shades of night began to fall.

As Jack did not appear, Harvey grew very uneasy.

He felt sure that something of a distressful nature had happened.

Harkaway had either been killed or made prisoner.

Giving him an unceremonious kick in the ribs, and a rough shaking, he roused the slumbering professor.

Sitting up, the latter smiled, as if with a sense of supreme satisfaction.

"Lovely sleep, Richard," he exclaimed, yawning—"beautiful repose. I suppose I have been in the land of dreams for some hours?"

"All the afternoon," replied Harvey.

"Custom of the country. Can't help it in these islands. Must take a siesta. Seems a long time between drinks, though. You don't appear to remember that I have such a thing as a mouth. Be a man ! Brace up, and give me some refreshment. I'm gasping like an expiring frog when there is no water in his pond."

Harvey handed him a bottle and allowed him to help himself, the calabash of water being by his side.

"Ah, that's good," cried Mole, drawing a long breath.

"I had a thirst on me a yard long."

"Yours is the thirst spoken of in the Testament, which is never quenched, sir."

"Don't be rude, Harvey. It ill becomes you to mock a grey-haired old man."

"I can't help it. You are such a caution when you begin."

"I've nothing else to do. Life is short. Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. Let us be happy, merry, and gay while we can. Sing hey! sing ho! tra-la-la!"

"I wonder you have not more respect for yourself than to be continually under the influence of alcohol."

"Don't be personal."

"You haven't drawn a sober breath, really, for years," Harvey went on.

Mr. Mole burst out laughing at this hit.

"Gad!" he said, "you're right. I don't believe I have. Funny, isn't it?"

"I call it disgusting—a man of your years, too."

"Bah! A man is as old as he feels, not as old as he looks. I feel young and fit as a three-year-old. Drop your personalities. Harkaway would not do it. By the way, where is the ever gay and festive one—our incomparable, superlative, dare-devil, fight-'em-all Jack?"

"That is what I want to speak to you about," replied Harvey, gravely.

"Is there anything wrong?" asked Mole.

"Something most infernally wrong. We are menaced by a great danger. Pull yourself together. Get up, and let us see what is best to be done under the circumstances."

This speech alarmed Mr. Mole, who promptly rose to his feet, and though a little rocky, looked inquiringly at Harvey.

"Now, Dick," said Mole, "tell me all about it. I know something unlucky has happened, because you show it in your face, which, pardon me, is as long as a child's farthing kite."

"I can't help it, sir," answered Harvey, dolefully.

"You can always depend on me. In moments of danger, call upon your Mole—your faithful servant, Isaac Mole."

"If I could rely on you——"

"Indeed, you can. Never have I failed you. In moments of danger, have I not invariably turned up trumps? The enemy have fled at the sight of me. I have scattered hosts."

"As you say so, I suppose it is all right; but I must confess I do not remember it."

"Oh, that's all bosh! Your memory is defective. I could give you plenty of instances, but we will not waste time."

"I wish to goodness you would not."

"Enough said. Let us return to our mutton—that is, to our Jack. Not that I want to compare him to a sheep. It is simply a French phrase, which means, let us get back to our subject."

"As if I did not know that! We are not at school now."

"Excuse me. The tutorial idea is always uppermost with me. I have imparted instruction, and I hope sincerely you have benefited by it."

"We shall never come to Jack, if you go on like this."

"Why does he not come to us?"

"That is the question that perplexes me," said Harvey. "While you were asleep, Jack and I saw a Chinese junk wrecked close by here. Out of a crew of thirty or thereabouts, one-third were drowned; the others are camped hard by the shore. Among them was a white man, whom I am sure I saw at Singapore."

"Ah! this is serious."

"If I am correct, this fellow is associated with pirates, and a sworn friend of Hunston."

"Worse and worse."

"Jack would go out to see who the white man was, four hours or more ago. He followed him inland."

"Hem!" said Mole. "It strikes me very forcibly that Harkaway has fallen a victim to his temerity, and is in the hands of the heathen."

"So I think. What shall we do?"

A dead silence ensued.

The professor, in spite of his boasting, had no inclination to attack a score of Chinamen.

It occurred to him that he and Harvey stood in imminent danger of being captured.

They would have to go out of the cave to obtain food and water.

"It is a very difficult fix to be placed in," he remarked, at length. "I should advise only going out at night-time. We can get birds, fish, fruit, and water in the dark."

"That is nothing," cried Harvey. "Fruit and water will do for me. I am thinking about Jack. How can we rescue him?"

"Only by killing the Chinese and the white man you have spoken of. If Harkaway does not come back before morning, I shall conclude that he is captured."

"Suppose that means death by slow torture?"

"Don't suggest any thing so dreadful," replied Mole. "You make my blood run cold."

"I want to go out to-night to see after good old Jack. I can't rest."

"No, no. Wait till the morning," said Mole.

"I'll be hanged if I do! If you won't come with me, I will go to the Chinese camp by myself!" said Harvey, in a determined tone.

"Well, well, if you insist, in your headstrong way——"

"I do. How would you like to be left in the lurch?"

"All right. Let's have a drink, and I'm with you, my boy. After all, you can't do without your Mole. Obligated to fall back on the old man, who is the only one in your party who always has his wits about him, and shows that he was born to be a leader of men and—ahem!—boys."

The day had been close, the night was suffocatingly hot in the cave.

Not a breath of air was stirring.

It was as if they were in an oven, and they felt it a decided relief when they got outside.

The stars were shining brightly, and the crescent moon, in its second quarter, was just rising above the sea.

Harvey and Mole were armed with revolvers, each of which contained seven chambers, which was equivalent to fourteen lives, if their aim was correct.

They proceeded cautiously along the shore, until they came near enough to the stockade to reconnoitre.

The Chinese had saved a chest of opium from the wreck of the junk, and, being assured by Peter Punchard that there was no danger of attack from men, beasts, or snakes, they were lying about on the sand in a comatose condition, having smoked themselves into a happy state of oblivion.

One man leant against a palm-tree, envying his comrades, for he was on sentry duty.

Not for him were the delights of opium, which would

be perfect bliss, were it not for the horrible awakening and the terrible reaction, which makes a man a wreck of humanity upon the sands of time.

Hi Lung and Peter Punchard had retired into the stockade, and fallen asleep through a different kind of debauch.

Peter had made salvage of a case of rum, and, having got some water from the spring, they indulged in the old Jamaica, until they forgot all their cares and troubles.

The sentry was Chang, who had been told off by Hi Lung to guard Jack night and day.

This was rather a difficult thing to do, as Chang wanted to sleep as well as the rest.

Jack had dug two graves ; that was his task for the day ; bread fruit, grapes, and nuts, had been supplied to him ; he had sat down with his back against a palm-tree, and dozed off.

It occurred to Chang that he would like to take a rest as well as the others, and, as Harvey and Mole came up to the camp, he slipped a piece of rope round his legs and arms.

"What the deuce are you up to, now?" cried Jack. "I've given my parole!"

"Tyee uppee. Makee safee," replied Chang.

"Oh! It's you, is it, you yellow-skinned demon! I thought I was somewhere else."

"You muchee dreamee!"

"Go on. Get your hair cut, or you'll never knock 'em this side of the equator, you ugly spawn of creation!"

"Talkee, talkee, no good. Me have a sleeper."

Saying this, Chang threw himself on the ground, put a piece of opium in his mouth, and was soon in the land of nod.

Jack looked wearily out upon the sea, which that night was so still that its phosphorescent bosom only heaved gently, like that of a sleeping beauty whose mind is full of her own charms, and the admiration they arouse in the minds of men.

"It is all quiet," whispered Harvey. "There is Jack. Do you see? The guard has bound him. I told you that he was a prisoner, and that we should make a discovery."

"Do you think we can get to speak to him?" replied Mole.

"I mean to. Stay where you are."

"No, I wish to come with you. There is no danger."

"Ha, ha!" laughed Harvey. "In that case, of course, you will come."

"It isn't that, Dick," answered Mole. "You know me——"

"For a boaster!"

"Not at all. What you dare do so dare I! Come on. Death to the Chinese! Shall I give my war-whoop?"

"If you do, you old fool, I'll floor you. Hold your row!"

With these words, Harvey walked up to the spot where Jack was. Mole followed at a short distance behind him.

Harvey distinctly saw Jack under the palm-tree in the moonlight, and immediately touched Mole on the shoulder.

"Stay where you are," he exclaimed; "we have found the pirates' camp, for I am persuaded that these fellows are the vermin who sweep the seas of honest merchantmen. Jack is close to us. I will speak to him, and see what is best to be done."

"Be careful," replied Mole, in a whisper.

"The crew of the junk are asleep."

"There may be some on the watch without your being able to detect their presence."

"I don't think so. Maybe, they have a chest of opium."

"They are as artful as weasels. For heaven's sake, don't wake them up."

"It is not my intention," said Harvey.

"I can not run with this infernal wooden leg of mine, and if there is any danger, perhaps I had better make a start for the cave. Someone must protect the stronghold, you know," exclaimed Mr. Mole.

Harvey could not refrain from smiling.

This speech was so characteristic of the professor.

"Very well," he answered, "go back to the cave. It is the best place for you."

"Not that I'm afraid——"

"Oh no. We know all about that. You will only do more harm than good if you stay. I can see that."

"If you want to annihilate these yellow-skinned heathen——"

Again Harvey interrupted him.

"Should I want to do so I can do it I suppose without your help! Cut along," he answered.

"As you say so, I will go."

"Make haste, for goodness' sake! You are only hindering me."

"It's the wooden leg. Were it not for that, I could stand my ground against a legion."

"Will you be off?"

"I'm going. Take care of Jack. He is a fine fellow. Bring him back with you."

Saying this, Mr. Mole stumped off on the return journey. Danger was rather too close to him to be pleasant.

He wanted to keep up his assumed reputation for courage, and that was all.

When Harvey was alone, he advanced towards Harkaway, clutching his pistol, so as to be ready for any emergency.

Jack was half asleep, but the sound of someone approaching soon roused him.

Looking up, he was surprised in the extreme to see his friend.

"Dick!" he exclaimed, gladly.

"Hush!" replied Harvey. "I have found you a captive, as I expected. Let me cut your bonds. No one is about. Escape at once."

Jack shook his head sadly.

"I cannot do it," he replied.

"How is that? Have you taken leave of your senses?"

"Not quite so bad as that, old boy," he answered; "but I have given my parole."

"Is your word to be kept to a pack of pirates and scoundrels?"

"The word of an English gentleman must always be kept. Don't you know that, Dick?"

"You are right," said Harvey. "Let me sit by your side, and tell me all about it."

He took a seat close to Harkaway, and they began to converse in whispers.

"There is not much to tell," replied Jack. "I have been a fool! The white man I followed is Peter Purchard, of Singapore."

"Didn't I tell you so?" Harvey cried.

"He spun a long yarn about his being Bill Driver, threw me off my guard, and got the budge on me, as the sailors say. When I least expected it, he knocked me silly, bound me, and, when I came to, made me a prisoner on parole."

"You ought not to be tied now, if you are on your word of honour."

"True; but Punchard does not know of it. He and Hi Lung are drunk on some rum they saved from the wreck."

"Who did it?"

"The man appointed to watch me. That fellow lying there, Chang by name. He was tired, so he fastened my limbs with a bit of ship's cord, and is enjoying his night's sleep."

"I wonder Punchard did not shoot you. What is to be the end of it?" remarked Harvey.

"You have not heard all."

"I can quite realise that fact. There is a secret or a mystery somewhere."

"You are right; and a very queer secret it is, too. Listen: This Chinese, Hi Lung, is a sort of pirate king. He knows Hunston. Punchard is a particular friend of Hunston's. The latter has offered a large reward for me alive, not dead, mind you."

"That is kind of him."

"Knowing that I was on board ship off the China coast, Punchard shipped with the pirate, Hi Lung, to go in search of me."

"Did they intend to fight us?"

"Rather. They had two small cannons on board the junk," answered Harkaway.

"What cheek! I like their style."

"They found me in a most unexpected manner, but they have got me, and I can't help myself. Punchard knew me directly he clapped his eyes on me."

"Seeing you in Singapore, I suppose?"

"No doubt."

"You have a face not easily forgotten," said Harvey.

"Really, Dick, you flatter me," laughed Jack, who kept up his spirits under the most disheartening circumstances.

"Does Punchard know you have friends on the island?"

"The estimable Peter guesses it, but I would give him no information whatever."

"If he catches Mole and me, what is to be our fate?"

"Oh, I did not tell you about that!"

"Pray do."

"I'd rather not. It might make you feel uncomfortable."

"What rot! I'm not easily funk'd, and I shall do a bunk back to the cave before any of these chaps wake up. Mole's gone; he came as far as the camp, and then hooked it."

"Didn't like the look of things, eh?"

"He put his anxiety to reach the crib down to his timber-toes—wooden legs, you know."

"It is rough on him," said Jack, sympathisingly.

"So it is; but he was always a blower—he never will be a fighter."

"That's not his line of country."

"What is Punchard going to do with us, if he lands us?"

"Hunston has ordered that you and Mole, or any of the rest of my party, are not to receive any mercy. Hi Lung can have you, and work his wicked will on you—skin you alive, boil you, or otherwise martyrise you."

"That's cheerful."

"The Chinese have a way of putting you to death, which they call 'dying by inches.'"

"What does it consist of?"

"They tie you naked to a stick, and with a sharp knife, or a razor, with an extra-fine edge for choice, they cut little bits out of you, all over your body, until you bleed to death."

"Oh, that's nothing," said Harvey, chaffingly. "I think I could enjoy that. Don't they do something worse than that?"

"They beat you with sticks, until you are one big bruise, and as pulpy as a jellyfish."

"Any thing more?"

"Sometimes they make you swallow a dynamite cartridge, and play at looking for fragments of your body. The man who finds your head, weighs in first and wins the game; legs come second, arms third. It is a very nice game to play at—from a Chinese point of view."

Harvey turned pale.

"Don't jest, Jack," he exclaimed. "These wretches

are quite capable of doing what you have depicted in fun."

"We may as well laugh as cry," Harkaway replied.

"Your life is safe, unless the pirates get off the island and take you to Hunston; then——"

Harvey paused abruptly.

"Go on," said Jack.

"Then," resumed Harvey, "heaven help you!"

"I fervently hope so," answered Jack, sincerely. "But I am in no particular fear of Mr. Hunston. I have licked him before, and I have a firm belief that I shall knock him again."

Harvey echoed that aspiration, and there was a pause in their conversation. At length, Jack said—

"I've been thinking."

"There is generally something in that cocoanut of yours," replied Harvey. "Let me have it."

"I don't want these Chinamen on this island; we've no room for them."

"No more do I; but how are we going to get rid of them? If we had a little vermin-destroying powder, we might strew it about on slices of pineapple."

"You have something better than that."

"I should like to know what?"

"Gunpowder. Come in the night and shoot them. Everything is fair in war. You want to save your skin, don't you?"

"Rather," replied Harvey; "but if I were to fire at that fellow Chang, I should rouse the whole camp—they can run like deer. Where should I be?"

"That is true. You can use a knife, though."

"Doesn't that savour somewhat of the midnight assassin?"

"Oh, if we are to be squeamish," cried Jack, "and stand upon ceremony with these Mongolians, we may as well say our prayers and prepare for death."

"I am wrong and you are right," answered Harvey.

"I'll kill them by twos and threes, night after night."

"They have made me dig graves. Two are ready to be filled."

"What is that for?"

"Hi Lung has an idea that some pestilence is going to carry them off, and he is preparing."

"Very well—we shall see," said Harvey. "Chang is there—another is a few yards off; will those two do to begin with?"

"Excellently well. It is a terrible task you have undertaken, though, Dick; be careful."

"I'll keep my eyes, and my ears too, open. They shall die gradually, and shall not see the hand that strikes them."

"You will have to be about night after night, so you had best sleep in the daytime."

"Perhaps they will do the same thing. If so, I shall perform my work in the day instead of the night. It is very likely that when they find themselves being killed off, they will watch."

"Don't get caught."

"Not if I know it! I'd kill the lot in one night, if it were not a little too risky."

"When will you start?"

"At once," replied Harvey, resolutely. "I am no coward, as you know; and if a thing has to be done, however risky it may be, I don't care to brood over it."

"That's right. Take the bull by the horns, as the saying is. If they ask me if I have seen any thing, I'll swear I saw a spirit, brandishing a knife, and describe him as something between an Asiatic ogre and a Cornish giant, with a dash of the mediæval fiend in him, horns, tail, and pitchfork."

"They are superstitious," remarked Harvey, "and will readily credit anything horrible, ugly, and abnormal. Their ideal of the beautiful is something hideous and ghastly."

"I know it. One word more before you go."

"Mention it."

"Keep Mole quiet. If the old donkey comes fooling about here, he will give the whole thing away," said Jack.

"I will exercise such authority as I have over him," replied Harvey.

"Good-night, Dick. Thank you for coming after me."

"As if I would leave you! Where is Hunston's friend, Punchard?"

"In that bamboo place they call the stockade. You'll have to be careful if you go in there."

"I sha'n't try a rush at him to-night. There is plenty of time. Good-night, Jack, and heaven bless and keep you!"

"The same to you, Dick. Wish you luck."

They shook hands, and Harvey glided noiselessly away,

Ordinarily, he had a very good-tempered face, but as he moved off his expression changed.

It showed how the passions can work upon a man.

His countenance clouded, it became hard, almost demoniacal, as he clenched his teeth together, and grasped his knife firmly.

He had no desire to take the life of any of these men, but, under the circumstances, it was a paramount necessity.

They would show him no mercy.

At any moment, when they caught him, they would put him to a cruel death.

By doing what he was about to do, he would probably save himself, Mr. Mole, and Jack.

This was worth doing something for.

Chang slept as only a Chinaman can sleep when he has had his dose of opium.

There was a placid, childlike smile upon his parted lips, which showed his yellow teeth, some of which resembled fangs.

Bending over him, Harvey plunged his knife into his heart.

He started, there was a gurgling sound in his throat, his limbs twitched convulsively, but that was all.

No cry escaped him.

Withdrawing the knife, Dick glided to a second Chinese and treated him in the same manner.

Deeming this enough for one night, he retired, and made his way back to the cave.

Jack had witnessed the deeds, but no thrill of horror ran through him, for he could feel no pity for the blood-thirsty pirates.

They were truly enemies of the human race.

For their crimes they ought to have been hung in chains long ago.

It was with difficulty, however, that he composed himself to slumber.

Tired as he was, sleep refused to visit his eyelids.

At last he went off, being troubled with dreadful dreams.

He was roused by loud cries.

The Chinese were awake, and it had not taken them long to discover the deaths of their companions.

Peter Punchard and Hi Lung were quickly on the scene.

First they looked at Chang, then at his companion in misfortune, who was named Foochoo.

"Two men stabbee," exclaimed the pirate chief, looking first at one, then at the other.

"That's a queer start," said Punchard.

"It must be the foreign devil."

"I don't see that ; he had no weapon."

"Lettee us askee him. If he killee our men, we chop-pee him head off."

They walked over to Harkaway.

He saw them coming, and was prepared what to say.

"Me heeree no makee bobbery in the nightee," muttered Hi Lung, shaking his head. "It very strange dammee business."

"I'm glad you've come, Punchard," exclaimed Jack, eagerly. "Has any thing happened?"

"Yes, curse it ! Two of our chaps have been skewered in their sleep," was the reply.

"Never !"

"It's a fact. Chang and Foochoo."

"Well, I am not altogether surprised. Chang wanted to have a doss, so, contrary to orders, he bound me, as you see. By the way, I will thank you to let me loose."

"Certainly."

"It is a breach of our agreement, you know."

"I admit that," Peter Punchard replied.

He cut the cords, and Harkaway rose, glad to stretch his limbs once more.

"Before I went to sleep," continued Jack, "I saw a wild-looking man come, as it appeared, out of the sea. Flames seemed to come out of his mouth and nostrils ; he brandished a knife in his hand, and his eyes were like coals of fire, while his face was that of an eagle. Never before did I see such a horrible creature. He frightened me so that I fainted."

Hi Lung began to tremble.

"What did I tellee?" he said. "Bad luckee is a follower of us; we all die. Yesterday I have diggee two graves. Lookee! Two bodies ready for the graves."

"What do you suppose it is?" asked Punchard.

"The Old Man of the Sea."

"Who is he when he is at home?"

"Vellee greatee spirit—much power. We sheddee much bloodee on the sea, the evil spirit comee to us and bringee vengeance."

"I'll keep a jolly good watch to-night," said Punchard.

"If he comes again, I'll give him toko."

"No goodee," answered the pirate, with a melancholy sigh.

"I shall sit up anyhow."

"Diggee more graves to-day. All gottee die soon."

"You're a cheerful cuss. There is some humbug about this."

Hi Lung did not care to argue the point. He had his idea, and Punchard had his.

The pirate walked away, and ordered the bodies to be put in the graves.

This was done. Afterwards tea was made, and the Chinese squatted on their hams while they had breakfast.

Punchard and Jack remained together.

"I say, Mr. Harkaway, you're playing it low down on this community," said Peter.

"What do you mean?" asked Jack.

"You're an artful card. What you don't know isn't worth knowing. I guess you've forgotten years ago more than most men know at fifty."

"Indeed! you flatter me."

"How about the spirit that came out of the sea?"

"It was something dreadful to look at."

"The veritable original and only true bogey man?"

"If you like to think so."

"Come, come, that won't wash," said Punchard.

"How did you do it? I won't blab, if you——"

"When I was bound, how could I injure anyone?" Harkaway interrupted.

"Of course not. Your pals did it. You admitted you had some on the island. I'll have a search this blessed

day, and if I find them, mark me, we'll have blood for blood."

"Do your worst," replied Jack.

"I fully intend to do so."

Saying this, Punchard turned on his heel and joined his allies at breakfast.

When the Celestials had refreshed themselves, they condescended to allow Jack to sit down and recruit his energies on tea and biscuit, which did not taste the nicer for being soaked in salt water.

When he had finished, he was set to work at grave-digging again.

Punchard went out.

His purpose was to find the hiding-place of Jack's friends.

Towards the evening he returned dispirited, having been unable to discover any trace of Mole and Harvey.

Jack awaited the coming of night with the utmost anxiety.

Though fatigued, Peter Punchard announced his intention of sitting up to watch for the person who had killed Chang and Foochoo.

Hi Lung and the others indulged in their usual opium debauch and went to sleep, some in the stockade, others on the sandy ground.

CHAPTER XL.

PETER PUNCHARD AND HARVEY FIGHT—JACK ESCAPES—THE CAVE IS DISCOVERED—A SIEGE AND A RESCUE.

JACK was not bound on this occasion, and as the luxury of a bed was a thing unknown, he selected a shady spot, where he lay down.

It was necessary to be careful about shade at night-time when sleeping in the open air.

The moonlight is very pernicious to the eyes.

There is a complaint well known in the tropics as moon blindness, produced by the lunar beams.

This sometimes renders a man stone blind for weeks, and has been known to result in permanent injury to the sight.

Gladly would he have recruited exhausted nature by going to sleep, but the thought of Harvey prevented him.

He expected a terrible scene that night.

Punchard came over to where he was lying, having a pistol in one hand and a knife in the other.

"How many graves have you dug to-day?" he asked.

"Three," replied Jack.

"You expect your friend to come to-night and fill them. Ha, ha! Perhaps he will occupy one!"

"Or you," said Jack; "which will it be?"

"It will be a match; and I am willing to be bet two to one on myself."

"Done. I'll take you, but I hope you will never pay me."

"That means that you wish me dead, for of course if I lose the bet, I die, and dead men can't pay debts, and there being no estate to realise on, you'll be the loser."

"You don't suppose I have any particular affection for you? I assure you if you were to kick out this minute I should not dream of going into mourning for you."

"That's ungrateful. I might kill you at any moment. Yesterday I could have shot you."

"Don't assume a virtue when you have it not," said Jack. "It would not pay you to kill me; and fellows like you live for sordid gain. Hunston's offered reward is more to your taste than knocking me on the head would be."

"I won't say that you are not right. Money is my mark!"

Jack made no answer.

He despised Punchard so much that he did not care to talk to him.

A silence ensued which lasted some time.

It was only broken by the noise made by the countless insects that are active during the night-time.

Suddenly, Punchard, who had placed his back against a tree and closed his eyes, heard a subdued cry.

He started to his feet in a moment.

So did Harkaway, who had also heard the noise.

They looked in the direction from whence it came, and saw a man standing over a Chinaman.

There was a knife dripping with blood in his hand.

Jack recognised Harvey, but Punchard saw only the hidden foe, who had attacked them the night before. The mysterious slayer of his companions was in front of him.

He raised his pistol to fire.

Harvey saw the movement, and took refuge behind a tree.

It was easy enough to conceal himself, as the trees grew closely together.

And he could dart from one to another without being detected.

Punchard rubbed his eyes.

"Where the deuce has he gone?" he exclaimed. "I saw him a second ago, but I can't now."

"Didn't I tell you it was a spirit?" replied Jack.

"That be blowed for a yarn! Haul in your slack. That was no ghost."

"All right. Call me names—abuse me, and say that I am an economist of the truth."

"If that means a liar, you're all that."

"Think so?"

"I'll swear to it. That man's your pal, and he wants to wipe us out by degrees—twos and threes at a time."

"Stick to it. If you really think he is flesh and blood seek him, put him to the test, and fight him. Couldn't you see he is a shadowy ghost—nothing but vapour?"

"That's too thin. Let me get hold of him," said Punchard.

The ghost theory would not go down with him at all.

It mattered very little to Harkaway whether it did or not.

All he wanted was to occupy the sailor's attention for a time.

"Yes," added Punchard, "all I want is to come face to face with this pretended spirit of yours."

At that moment his quick ear detected the sound of a footstep behind him.

He was on the alert immediately.

Turning round briskly, he was confronted with Harvey, who had crept round the grove of trees.

The sound of a pistol shot would have roused the entire camp.

This contingency Harvey wished to avoid.

When he had stabbed the Chinaman, he saw Punchard by Jack's side, and disappeared behind the trees, so as to take him in the rear.

Before Peter Punchard could discharge his pistol, Harvey struck him with his knife in the right shoulder.

The revolver fell from his disabled hand, the arm being rendered powerless.

But the sailor was not yet beaten. In his left hand he held his knife, which was a murderous-looking article, known among the Chinese and Malays as a kreesse.

With the utmost frenzy he aimed a blow at Harvey.

The latter only succeeded in avoiding it by half an inch.

For a few moments, Punchard slashed wildly at his opponent.

He gained no advantage, however.

Harvey foiled his efforts and parried every thrust, with the skill of a practical swordsman.

At last he saw his opportunity.

Throwing himself upon Punchard, he drove his weapon into his chest, up to the hilt.

The sailor fell to the earth with a hoarse cry, bathed in blood.

During this closely contested and highly exciting fight, Harkaway had not moved.

As he had given his parole, he did not think it fair even to help his old friend.

But now that Punchard, to whom he had given his parole, was either dead or dying, he looked upon the matter in a different light.

To Hi Lung and the Chinese he had given no pledge.

It was consistent with the preservation of his honour for him to escape, if he could.

"Is he done for, Dick?" he asked, in a voice husky with suppressed emotion.

"He's a settled member, but I'll make sure of him," replied Harvey.

Another blow with the knife rendered any doubt upon the matter impossible.

Peter Punchard breathed his last.

"Run, Jack! Come with me," cried Harvey. "You are under no obligation to anyone now. You may carry chivalry too far. These pirates will show you no mercy."

"I'm with you," answered Jack. "Step out lively! Put your best leg forward! Get under weigh."

Without any further delay, they quitted the pirate camp at a rapid pace.

Neither of them had the least idea that they were watched.

Such, however, was the case.

Hi Lung was wide-awake, and had been so all the time the fight was going on.

Being, as we have said, a superstitious coward, he did not dare to interfere.

He fancied he might incur the special resentment of the spirit.

But when he saw that the supposed ghost ran away with Jack, his eyes were opened.

Without rousing any of his fellows, he followed in pursuit of the fugitives.

"No ghostee," he muttered, "me foolee! Ha, ha! To-morrow me foolee, too! Waitee bittee. Findee their camp. Me clever allee samee as Englishman."

When they had gone half way towards the cave Jack and Harvey stopped running.

They fancied that they were safe from pursuit.

Taking it easy, they walked to the cave.

When they entered it they found Mr. Mole wrapped in a vinous slumber.

"I reckon we will follow his example," said Jack, pointing to the professor.

"Yes. We are safe now, thank heaven," replied Harvey.

They had a drink of the grape wine, and stretched themselves out on the floor.

Little did they dream that the keen almond-shaped eyes of the Chinaman, Hi Lung, were upon them.

Had they done so, they would not have been so happy.

The Chinaman was satisfied with what he had discovered, and returned to the stockade to organize an attack upon the cave in the morning.

The night passed without any event of importance occurring.

As soon as the day dawned Jack woke up, and went outside the cave.

He wanted to look in the direction of the pirates' camp to see if they were moving.

Scarcely had he appeared, than he met with a hot reception.

A couple of bullets whistled past his head.

Alarmed at this, he retreated into the cave and hastily roused Harvey and Mole.

"Get up, for heaven's sake!" he cried. "The yellow fiends have found us out."

"Shoot them down!" said Harvey. "This cave is not an easy place to storm."

"You back, Harkaway! The cave attacked! What does all this mean?" asked Mole.

"Fight for your life! Don't ask questions now. The Johnnies are five to one against us!" replied Jack.

"I'll do my best, as usual," said Mole.

They snatched up their weapons, and went to the mouth of the cave.

The Chinese were approaching rapidly, in loose formation, and without seeking any shelter or cover for themselves.

Jack, Harvey, and Mole fired at them, keeping out of sight as well as they could.

The bullets were returned, but without doing any damage, as the English knelt down behind the rocks.

For some time the firing continued on both sides.

The Chinese suffered severely, and in half-an-hour had lost half of their number.

This discouraged them.

They retired to a distance, where they were out of range.

But the siege was not over.

Glad of a respite, Jack left Mole as a sentry, and, with Harvey, partook of some food.

They stood greatly in need of it.

It was now about nine o'clock in the morning.

The sun was shining brightly, and the sea was rough with a strong breeze blowing inland.

Jack looked out of the window seaward.

After gazing at the restless waves for a minute or more, he was surprised to see a ship, with all sail set, round the point near the pirates' camp.

When it was in the bay, sail was taken in, and the sailors dropped anchor.

"Dick," cried Harkaway, "here's a ship!"

"Thank heaven for that! What are her colours?" replied Harvey.

"English. If I am not mistaken, it is our own vessel."

"Ours! Oh, Jack, if you should be right!"

"I am. I can see Emily and Hilda in the bows, and Pike and the rest of them. She didn't founder in the storm, after all. Hurrah!"

"Hurrah!" echoed Dick. "Look! they are waving handkerchiefs."

"I'd return that, only I haven't got a handkerchief. Lend me your shirt."

In an instant Harvey stripped off his shirt.

He gave it to Harkaway, who waved it out of the window.

The signal was seen.

Half-a-dozen pistols were discharged from the vessel in recognition.

This roused the Chinese.

Hi Lung and his pirates looked on the sea, and beholding the ship, became much alarmed.

They held a hurried consultation.

Then they ran inland, as fast as their legs would carry them.

Mole came in.

"The enemy's skeddadled," he said. "They saw me at the mouth of the cave and bolted. I never had any opinion of a race that don't wear heels to their boots."

"You did not frighten them," replied Jack.

"What did it, then?"

"I will tell you."

"Certainly; explain the stampede."

"Our ship has come back. Let us go down to the beach, and meet our friends."

"With pleasure. What a relief! Let me—er—have a little refreshment first."

They quitted the cave, and hastened to the shore.

A boat had put off.

Soon they were shaking hands all round with those nearest and dearest to them.

Explanations followed.

The vessel had been swept many miles out to sea, and was badly injured by the tidal wave.

Damages had been gradually repaired, and the vessel had returned to the island.

Jack, Harvey, and Mole went on board.

Before sundown the ship weighed anchor.

Nothing was seen or heard of Hi Lung or his pirates, nor did anybody know what became of them.

* * * * *

Within four-and-twenty hours more they disembarked, and the whole party started shortly for Mr. Mole's plantation.

No one could have recognised Mr. Mole, he had so disguised himself to avoid the dreaded Brick.

And now they were fairly landed in China. But, alas ! without young Jack.

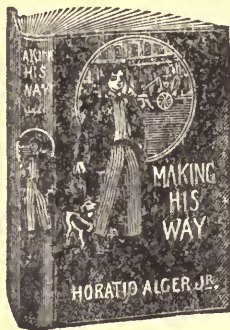
Where was he ?

It had doubtless gone hard with him this time, for he was in the hands of cruel pirates.

His friends and family secretly mourned him as dead, although they did not admit to each other their fatal convictions.

THE END.

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